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What's new from manufacturers and suppliers?

A look at the latest products and projects from global attraction providers

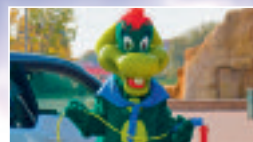
24 Waterpark news



28 Asia Attractions conference and awards



45 Gardaland serves electric vehicle owners



Open to Question
Mack Eckert, Holiday
World & Splashin' Safari

Immersive attractions
at Lionsgate
Entertainment World

Park Life
Futuroscope,
France



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Trying to find the positives

Andrew Mellor **Editor**

IN this issue of InterPark each year I usually take a look back at the previous year's IAAPA Expo and reflect on some of the activities and events which took place during the Expo week in Orlando. But of course this year is very different and with the cancellation of the 2020 event, not to mention numerous other industry occasions, we all missed out on the largest gathering of the year which so many of us attend religiously and thoroughly enjoy.

I've spoken to a number of people who have mentioned how strange it was not taking their annual trip to the US but it is just one of the many things that understandably couldn't go ahead as the world continues to fight the global pandemic. Whenever we might get back to attending conferences and trade shows is anybody's guess at the moment but at least now vaccination programmes are rolling out there would appear to be some light at the end of the tunnel. In the meantime, we just have to get on with life as best we can.

Of course a key element of the IAAPA Expo is the opportunity the trade show allows for the announcement of all kinds of new projects for parks and other venues. The 2019 event was no exception for this but as we now know, a lot of the ride openings and other launches announced then for 2020 have inevitably been postponed. Many have since been moved to this year so we can only hope that as we start to defeat COVID-19 such long awaited and highly anticipated projects can make their debuts.

That is not to say, however, that all projects planned for opening last year have had to wait and in this issue we look at what is undoubtedly one of the most impressive and spectacular projects to open in 2020, and indeed in many years, namely the new Rookburgh themed area at Phantasialand in Germany.

The latest addition to the park takes guests into a steampunk themed industrial world in which the attention to detail is hugely impressive. Rookburgh is part of the themed area Berlin and the two have been combined to create a place where industrial tones and the theme of aviation are central. The centrepiece ride is the F.L.Y. coaster from Vekoma, a new generation of flying coaster featuring technological advances that push the boundaries of rider experience. The attraction carves its way through the huge scale themed area of Rookburgh, which was four years in the making, and is an amazing feat of design and ingenuity when one considers how the track intertwines with all that surrounds it. Guests are also able to stay at the Hotel Charles Lindbergh, where they can sample an originally themed cabin and "sleep like an astronaut" in uniquely themed rooms. A variety of music and smells heighten the senses too and help to strike the right tone.

The park states that "We wanted to bring both the steampunk theme and the Berlin area together (in a setting) in which industrial tones and the theme of aviation were central, while innovative yet charmingly old-fashioned characteristics of steampunk shaped the design and spirit," and it has certainly achieved that goal – in buckets!

So among all the doom and gloom we've seen during the past 12 months, and the lack of activity that has hit our industry and every other business sector too, there has still been some positive news to report on with projects that have been completed and opened. Indeed, as we couldn't speak to companies in Orlando in November we also bring the latest news from a selection of manufacturers in another feature article in this issue, which highlights a variety of new products and projects that progressed in 2020 and into the new year – so not all was lost.

6 World news

8 Europe news

12 Middle East news

14 US news

18 Asia news

22 China news

24 Waterpark news

28 Asia Attractions annual awards and conference

32 Feature
Manufacturer and supplier news

40 Project profile
F.L.Y. coaster, Phantasialand

46 Feature
Lionsgate Entertainment World

50 Customer service –
Old fashioned values remain true

52 Open to Question
Matt Eckert,
Holiday World & Splashin' Safari

56 Park Life
Futuroscope, France

60 Dennis Spiegel looks at ...
Shameful scenes in the US capital

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Calendar

February 24–26

8th Events & Amusement Expo Tokyo, Makuhari Messe, Tokyo, JAPAN
Contact: Reed Exhibitions Japan Ltd.
Tel: +813 3349 8510
Email: eventexpo.eng@reedexpo.co.jp
www.eventexpo.jp/en-gb.html

March 25–27

CAE Beijing 2021, China International Exhibition Centre, Shunyi New Venue, Beijing, CHINA
Contact: Katie Wang, L&A International Ltd., 6 Penmere Grove, Sale, Cheshire, M33 4FP, UK
Tel: +44 (0)161 610 0022
Email: katie.w@chinaattractionsexpo.org
www.chinaattractionsexpo.org

March 30– April 1

RAAPA Expo 2021, Pavilion 57, VDNH, Moscow, RUSSIA
Contact: RAAPA
Tel: +7 495 234 5233, Email: raapa@raapa.ru
www.raapa.ru

May 10– May 12

2021 Asia Amusement & Attractions Expo (AAA), China Import & Export Fair Complex (Area A), Guangzhou, CHINA
Contact: Tina Chang, Guangdong Grandeur International Exhibition Group
Tel: +86 20 2210 6418, Fax: +86 20 8257 9220
Email: sales@grandeurhk.com
www.aaaexpos.com

May 17–19

DEAL 2021, Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai, UAE
Contact: International Expo-Consults (IEC)
Tel: +971 4 343 5777, Email: deal@iecduhai.com
www.dealmiddleeastshow.com

June 1–3

Saudi Entertainment & Amusement Expo, Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Riyadh, SAUDI ARABIA
Contact: DMG Events
Tel: +9 6612 697 0287
Email: marketing@saudientertainmentandamusement.com
www.saudientertainmentexpo.com

June 3–5

Atrax '21. 9th International Amusement – Attraction, Park – Recreation Industry and Services Exhibition, Istanbul Expo Centre, Istanbul, TURKEY
Contact: Tureks International Fairs Co.
Tel: +90 212 570 63 05
Email: nergis@tureksfuur.com.tr
www.tureksfuur.com.tr

August 10–13

IAAPA Expo Asia 2021, Shanghai New International Expo Centre (SNIEC), Shanghai, CHINA
Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida, USA
Tel: +1 321 319 7600
Fax: +1 321 319 7690
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org
www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia

September 9–11

GTI GUANGZHOU 2021, Area A, China Import and Export Fair Pahou Complex, Guangzhou, CHINA
Contact: Haw Ji Co. Ltd./Game Time International
Tel: +86 20 8126 9851
Email: gametime@taiwanslot.com.tw
http://www.gtiexpo.com.tw/cncht/index.php

September 28–30

IAAPA Expo Europe, Barcelona, SPAIN
Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida, USA
Tel: +1 321 319 7600
Fax: +1 321 319 7690
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org
www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-europe

October 16–18

CAE Shanghai 2021, Shanghai World Expo Exhibition & Convention Centre, Shanghai, CHINA
Contact: Katie Wang, L&A International Ltd, 6 Penmere Grove, Sale, Cheshire, M33 4FP, UK
Tel: +44 (0)161 610 0022
Email: katie.w@chinaattractionsexpo.org
www.chinaattractionsexpo.org

October 19–22

WWA Show 2021, Walt Disney World Resort, Orlando, Florida, USA
Contact: WWA, 8826 Santa Fe Drive, Suite 310, Overland Park, KS 66212, USA
Tel: +1 913 381 6734
Email: patty@waterparks.org
www.waterparks.org

November 10–11


Family Attraction Expo 2021, NEC Birmingham, UK
Contact: 4 Colston Ave, Bristol, BS1 2NT, UK
Tel: +44 (0)117 930 4927
www.familyattractionexpo.co.uk

November 16–19

IAAPA Expo, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida, USA
Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida, USA
Tel: +1 321 319 7600
Fax: +1 321 319 7690
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org
www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo

November 17–18

MAPIC, Palais des Festivals, Cannes, FRANCE
Contact: Reed MIDEM 27 Quai Alphonse Le Gallo, CS 10026 Boulogne, FRANCE
Tel: +33 179 71 95 15
Email: Daniela.jakovljevic@reedmidem.com
www.mapic.com

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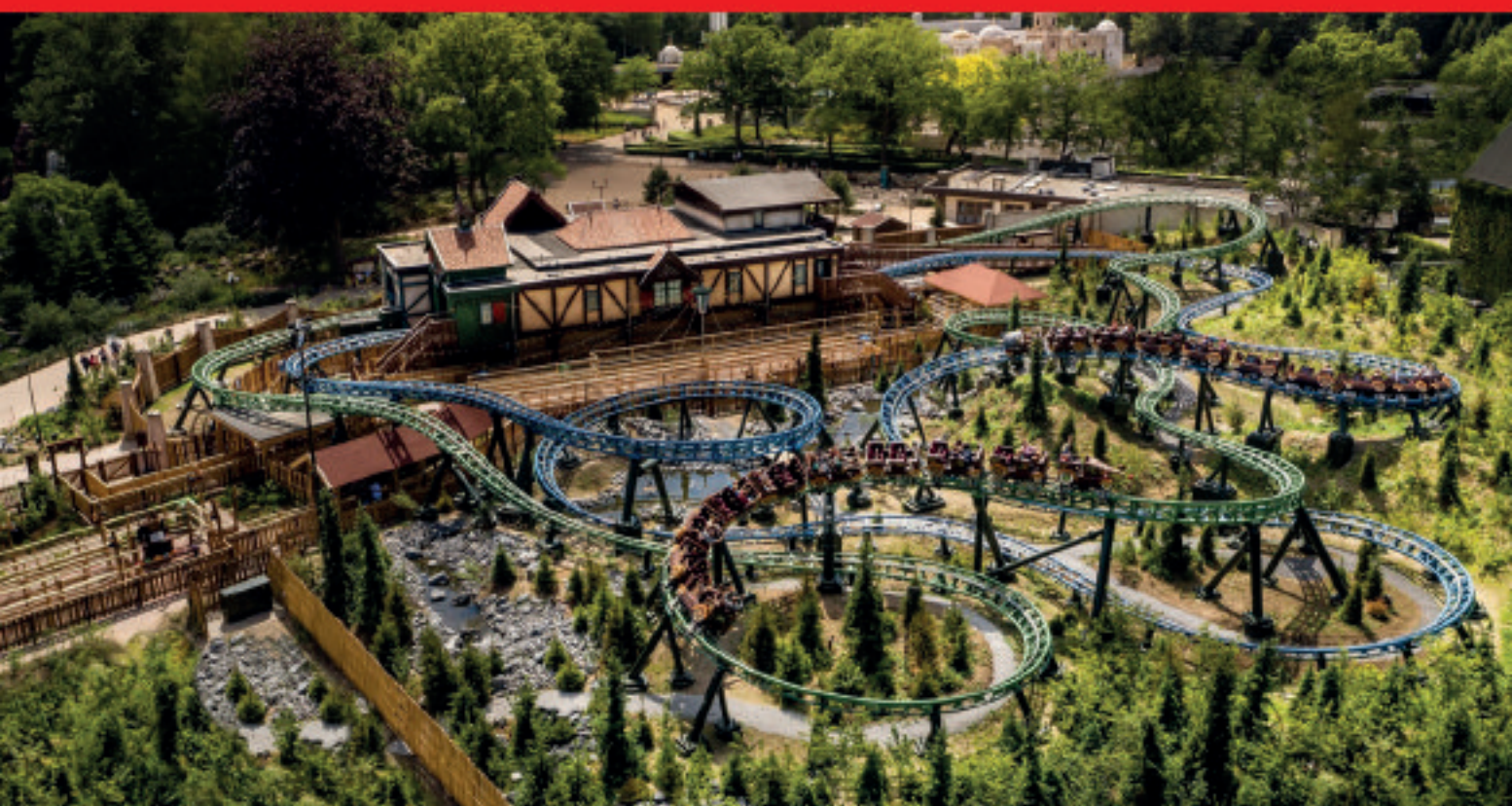
As dates sometimes change, please check with organisers before visiting international trade events.

Atrax '21 is scheduled to take place at the Istanbul Expo Centre in Istanbul, Turkey from June 3 to 5





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Therme Group and Russell Partnership Collection announce joint venture

THERME Group, creators of world-leading advanced and sustainable wellbeing resorts, has teamed up with Russell Partnership Group (RPG), a globally renowned food, hospitality and technology consultancy, to form a joint venture known as Therme RPC.

Therme RPC will deliver strategies of nutrition and transformational food across Therme Group wellbeing resorts around the world. Through an emphasis on bio-individuality and evidence-based nutrition, it is Therme RPC's aim to deliver the most innovative food experienced focused on wellbeing. The venture hopes to encourage sustainable behaviour change to benefit the physical, mental and social health of guests while serving tasty, quality food.

The partnership will feature a team of registered nutritionists, who will develop bespoke food guidelines in recognition that the nutritional needs of every individual are unique.

The food will be created through sustainable ventures, including vertical farm technology, which uses 95 per cent less water than traditional agriculture. Roof-top beehives, artisan bakeries, chalk stream fish farms and local producers will all supply ingredients to Therme RPC.

Professor David Russell, CEO of Therme RPC, commented: "Our joint venture has been two years in the making and delivers the optimum platform to establish Therme RPC as a unique global cornerstone in wellbeing and nutrition. Through this world-first unification, Therme RPC is energised and excited by the possibilities and opportunities that lay ahead."



IAAPA inducts three attraction industry icons into Hall of Fame

THREE industry legends have been inducted into the prestigious IAAPA Hall of Fame. Tony Baxter, Greg Hale and Mats Wedin were given the honour during the IAAPA Expo: Virtual Education Conference.

The IAAPA Hall of Fame awards honour individuals who have made innovative contributions that have an enduring impact on the industry and



who inspire colleagues and peers around the world. The award is considered the highest and most prestigious in the industry.

Since starting his career as an ice-cream scooper at Disneyland in Anaheim, California in 1965, Tony Baxter quickly progressed to a Disney Imagineer in 1970. Baxter's impressive achievements include assisting in the opening of the 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and Snow White's Adventure attractions at Walt Disney World in Orlando.

Greg Hale boasts an equally impressive story. Hale joined Walt Disney World in 1988 as manager of electrical and electronics engineering. It was

the start of a three-decade career which had a lasting impact on the world of ride safety on a global scale.

The prolific inventor has his name on more than 80 patents around the world, including the Disney FASTPASS service. Greg Hale has been an active volunteer within IAAPA, including being on the association's executive/finance, government relations, safety and governance committees. In 2017, Hale served as IAAPA's chairman of the board.

Theme park visionary Mats Wedin embarked on a career in the attractions industry in 1988, joining Liseberg amusement park in Gothenburg. Within five years, Wedin was promoted to CEO. From 1993 to 1998, he chaired the IAAPA International Council and helped expand the association's presence in Europe.

NEWS IN BRIEF

US The Walt Disney Company is to lay off a total of 32,000 staff. The figure includes an additional 4,000 cast members on top of plans to axe 28,000 jobs in its parks in Florida and California. The latest redundancies by Disney were announced during a company filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

EUROPE A replica of Stonehenge is to be built at the proposed Wichestun prehistoric theme park in Wigginton, Yorkshire, UK. Plans have been submitted for the new attraction site, located on the outskirts of York. The theme park will feature replica relics from ancient civilisations, including from the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages. Each different age would have its own zone at the park.

MIDDLE EAST Atkins, a member of the SNC-Lavalin Group, has been given a three-year contract with the Qiddiya theme park. The contract was awarded by the Qiddiya Investment Company (QIC), the driving force behind the Qiddiya development, which is home to some of Saudi Arabia's most ground-breaking experiences in entertainment, sports and the arts. Atkins will provide integrated lead design consultation supervision and cost management services for the theme park. The Six Flags Qiddiya theme park is due to open during the first phase of the Qiddiya project.

CHINA Shanghai Disney Resort welcomed the New Year in with a memorable celebration. Visitors at the site enjoyed a night-time show, a dazzling firework display and the surprise revealing of a special logo to commemorate the resort's fifth anniversary. Shanghai Disney Resort's fifth birthday is in June 2021 and the showcasing of the logo indicated what is in the pipeline at the resort this year.

ASIA Triotech has announced it is working on a major new attraction with OCT Group. The project involves the development of an interactive double walkthrough attraction at Fantasy Valley in Xiangyang in the Hubei province, China. The new walkthrough attraction will provide visitors with an immersive and interactive multi-sensory experience. The attraction is centred on the theme "space pirates" and guests will walk through a series of zones, each with its own immersive and interactive elements.

TEA announces new slate of Thea Awards recipients

THE Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) has announced the new slate of TEA Thea Awards recipients. The recipients were announced during the annual TEA Member Meeting which was held online on November 19, 2020.

Among the recipients for the prestigious TEA Thea Awards is Bob Weis, president of Walt Disney Imagineering, who will receive the TEA Buzz Price Thea Award for a lifetime of distinguished achievements.

Blackpool Pleasure Beach is receiving the Thea Classic Award, while the Entrance Experience of the St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station is also a recipient of a TEA Thea Award for outstanding achievement. Sesame Street: Street Mission in PortAventura World, Spain, is another recipient of an award for outstanding achievement.

The Qu Yuan live show at Jingzhou Oriental Heritage Park, Hubei, China, is also receiving an award for outstanding achievement, as is the Twilight Saga: Midnight Ride at Lionsgate Entertainment World, China, among a host of other stand-out rides, attractions and individuals recognised for outstanding achievements in the attractions industry.

A celebration to mark the award recipients' outstanding achievements will be held through a series of Thea Digital Case Studies being rolled out from July to December 2021. The winners will also be documented in TEA's official Thea Awards Programme.



Ultraleap signs five-year agreement with Aquarium of the Pacific

ULTRALEAP, a global leader in hand-tracking and mid-air haptic technologies, has signed a five-year agreement with the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California, for the use of Ultraleap's virtual touch technologies.

The Honda Pacific Visions Theatre at the Aquarium of the Pacific already features Ultraleap's hand tracking and mid-air haptic technology. The new, long-term contract extends the relationship between Ultraleap and the attraction venue, enabling virtual touch technology to engage with visitors at the aquarium.

The Honda Pacific Visions Theatre is an immersive 4D theatre, designed to resonate the smells, sights and sounds of the ocean. Ultraleap's technology integrates ultrasound to generate the sensation of touch in mid-air. The sensory element allows users to "feel" what is being portrayed to them on the screen. This type of sensory experience is highly engaging for visitors with hearing or visual disabilities.

John Rouse, Aquarium of the Pacific's vice-president of operations, said: "We have had amazing feedback about Ultraleap's virtual touch technology from our visitors. I'm pleased we can continue to secure it for visitors and explore future use cases of the touchless technology in the aquarium."



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IAAPA EMEA Trade Summit 2021 cancelled

IAAPA has announced that the IAAPA EMEA (Europe, Middle East, East Africa) Trade Summit scheduled for February has been cancelled.

The event was due to take place at Europa-Park in Germany from February 2 to 4, 2021. The decision was made due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic after careful review and with input from members, exhibitors and the IAAPA team.

In a statement, IAAPA said: "We are disappointed to have made this decision to cancel but now is not the time."

The event had been set to feature several unique programme formats, including interview-style sessions, an interactive workshop and IAAPA EDUSessions. Internationally renowned speakers, behind-the-scenes tours and networking opportunities with industry suppliers and professionals had all been planned, in addition to a trade exhibition area featuring over 80 manufacturers and suppliers.

The association is planning to host an IAAPA EMEA Spring Summit in Belgium from June 1 to 3.



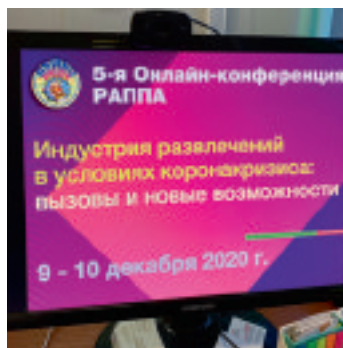
Over 300 industry professionals take part in 5th RAAPA online conference

ON December 9 and 10, more than 300 professionals and specialists in the attractions industry gathered online to take part in the 5th Russian Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (RAAPA) conference.

The virtual event was focused on the "Amusement industry in Coronacrisis conditions: challenges and new opportunities." It was the fifth online conference RAAPA has held since April 2020 and was hailed as a great success.

The first day of the conference was devoted to the challenges for theme parks and the second day was centred on the family entertainment industry. Over both days, experts discussed the present conditions the attractions industry is operating in, exploring the key changes and trends. Attendees considered pressing issues facing parks and FECs, such as the best ways of organising resorts after quarantine and how to create comfortable atmospheres for guests.

RAAPA is inviting specialists in the leisure and entertainment industries to attend forthcoming events, including the 23rd International Exhibition Amusement Rides and Entertainment Equipment RAAPA EXPO 2021. The event is being held from March 30 to April 1 in Moscow in pavilion 57 at VDNH.



Industry experts join forces to work on new coaster at Movie Park Germany

A GROUP of leading names in the attractions industry have teamed up to work on the new multi-dimension coaster, Movie Park Studios, that will launch at Movie Park Germany this year, the resort's 25th anniversary.

Leisure Expert Group, a leader in experience design, is working alongside Intamin, P&P Projects, IMAscore and Wiebe Damstra to create the new coaster. The ride will take visitors on a journey through the world of Hollywood movie production, past a total of 12 scenes, from the film archive to the special effects and sound departments.

The action ride is part coaster/part dark ride and propels guests to the heart of Hollywood where they can be stars for the day. The indoor attraction's station is built in an art deco style, radiating Hollywood nostalgia. The coaster reaches speeds of up to 60 km/h.

Leisure Expert Group has been working on the concept and design development of the new coaster. The collaboration involved the different companies visiting the original Hollywood Studios in California to give the project the best chance of being as authentic as possible.

Compagnie des Alpes releases 2019/2020 annual results



COMPAGNIE des Alpes, one of Europe's leading leisure park operators, has released its 2019/2020 annual financial results. The results confirm the operator's financial year has been substantially impacted by the global pandemic.

The group's consolidated sales reached €615.6m (\$747m) for the financial year of 2019/2020, a decrease of 27.9 per cent compared with 2018/2019.

Compagnie des Alpes' leisure park sales were more heavily affected by the pandemic than its ski resorts. The opening of the leisure parks was postponed by nearly three months during the peak season and the direct consequence of the COVID-19 crisis led to a 44.5 per cent decline in the total number of guests at the parks. The fall is reflective of the periods the leisure resorts remained closed and attracted fewer guests during the summer when the parks reopened. The fourth quarter of 2019/2020 saw a 37.3 per cent decrease in visitor numbers.

The year had, however, got off to a good start for the operator's leisure parks, with sales up by more than 12 per cent on a comparable basis by the time they were forced to close in mid-March.

Average spend per guest also rose by 5.3 per cent, due, in part, to efforts by parks to enhance and optimise onsite offerings.



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PortAventura World goes fully carbon neutral

PORTAVENTURA World in Spain has announced the entire resort is carbon neutral. The venue is now offsetting 100 per cent of direct emissions generated at the whole resort, including the theme park, hotels, offices and convention centre.

In 2019, 100 per cent of the energy consumed at the resort was generated entirely by renewable sources void of CO2 emissions. In June of the same year, PortAventura World opened its first carbon-neutral hotel, Colorado Greek.

Furthering its quest to be at the forefront of sustainable tourism in Europe, PortAventura World is installing a huge solar energy plant. It will be the largest self-consumption photovoltaic energy plant in a resort in Europe. The project is set to launch in 2021 and will supply energy to the whole resort, preventing 4,000 tonnes of CO2 being emitted every year.

PortAventura World also plans to eliminate plastics this year. The move is another of the resort's green initiatives and part of its focus on creating a more sustainable future.



Coen Bertens to leave Efteling Theme Park after 23 years

COEN Bertens, the director of the park business unit at Efteling Theme Park in the Netherlands, recently announced he was stepping down from the role after 23 years.



Bertens was due to remain responsible for the theme park until February 1, 2021, when he will officially leave. From this date, the board of directors at Efteling will comprise Fons Jurgens as CEO, Daan van Baarsen, CFO, Nicole Scheffers, theme park director, and Koen Sanders, director of commerce, creation and development and hotels and resorts.

Under Bertens' leadership, Efteling secured collaborations with other theme parks. Bertens also played a pivotal role in enhancing the visitor experience and increasing co-operation between colleagues at Efteling.

On his resignation, Bertens commented: "Efteling is a dynamic organisation that moves with the times. This also applies to me, it is time for a next step in my career. I look forward to inspiring others with everything I have been able to learn here in recent years."



Nergis Aslan, general manager of ATRAX organiser Tureks International Fairs Co

June dates planned for 9th ATRAX exhibition in Turkey

THE 2021 edition of the ATRAX Amusement, Attraction, Park-Recreation Exhibition is to take place from June 3 to 5. The event will be held at the Istanbul Expo Centre, Istanbul, Turkey.

The exhibition will be heavily focused on urban design, specifically park and landscaping projects designed for urban life and creating happy cities. ATRAX is offering the chance for all products, services and projects related to the construction and maintenance of recreational facilities, such as playgrounds, parks, sports venues and areas, to be showcased at the exhibition.

ATRAX attracts professionals from the amusement and attractions' sector, as well as officials from local governments, public offices, municipalities, investors, architects and tourism professionals.

ATRAX 2021 is sporting a #WePlayBig hashtag, centred on its aim to revitalise the sector and help companies, organisations and stakeholders in the sector achieve big business goals in 2021.

MK Themed Attractions creates steampunk train for Phantasialand

MK Themed Attractions, provider of themed attractions for theme parks and entertainment sites around the world, has created a series of themed products for Rookburgh, the new themed land at Phantasialand, Germany.

Among these, MK Themed Attractions has been working on the full-sized steampunk train located at Rookburgh, which is centred on an industrial theme. The replica steam train is located on a railway above the new land. The company has also been working on creating boilers and other themed items scattered around Rookburgh, giving the area a truly authentic industrial feel.

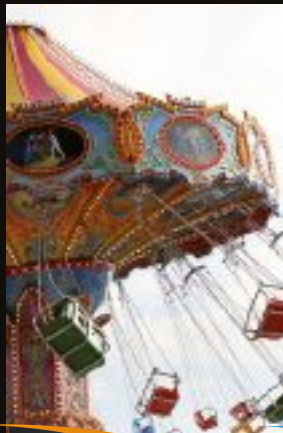
Guests riding on F.L.Y., the world's first flying launch coaster and the longest flying coaster in the world, which is the central attraction of the new area, can see MK Themed Attractions' creations as they ride.

From December 1, 2020, the theme park launched Phantasialand Wintertraum, an atmospheric winter experience where visitors could stroll through a sea of sparkling lights and be enchanted by colourful and shining mythical creatures.





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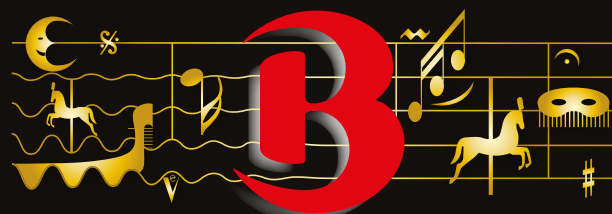
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Extreme Engineering ships Cloud Coaster to Middle East

EXTREME Engineering, an internationally recognised supplier of family-friendly attractions, has shipped its next roller coaster project to the Middle East.

The coaster is known as the Cloud Coaster and will take guests soaring into the air, creating the sensation of flying. The track of the ride is more than 200m in length, incorporating twists, turns, sudden drops and uphill lifts.

The attraction will include a raised platform for queuing. It is designed to be installed within the infrastructure of the building, thereby limiting the need for coaster columns.

Extreme Engineering, which holds 15 industry awards, including a recent award from IAAPA's first Virtual Expo, partnered with an industry leading master planning company to work on the project.

"We are excited about being part of one of the largest indoor theme parks in the world," said Extreme Engineering in a press statement.



The ride was due to be launched at a new theme park in Qatar at the beginning of 2021. However at the time of writing the name of the park had not been disclosed.

Interlink signs SuperFlume contract for Qatar

WATER attractions specialists Interlink has signed a contract with Qetaifan Projects to design, manufacture and install a SuperFlume ride. The SuperFlume will be located at Qetaifan Projects' new waterpark on Qetaifan Island North in Qatar.

The SuperFlume will have a number of unique features and will be the first attraction of its kind installed in the region.

Riders leave the station on board a 20-seater themed boat. The boat takes riders on a journey that explores the history and techniques of oil exploration in Qatar over the last 100 years. The boat voyages through lifts and drops as the story unfolds in a series of themed zones.

The finale of the experience takes place at the ride's focal point, known as the cracking tower, where it slowly rotates as it rises up a vertical lift with various special effects, emerging into the daylight and plunging straight down a 16m high chute, ending in a spectacular grand splash before heading back towards the station.

John Davies, commercial director at Interlink, commented on the installation, saying: "We are delighted to be involved with such a prestigious project like Qetaifan Island North's Waterpark. This unique, one of a kind SuperFlume ride is set to become something really spectacular and will surely prove to be a truly exciting family ride for visitors to the waterpark"



Semnox Solutions provides cashless system for Adventureland, UAE



SEMNOX Solutions, providers of venue management technology and creative solutions for the entertainment and amusement industry, is providing cashless solutions for Adventureland in Al Ain, UAE.

Adventureland is opening its fourth store in the Jimi Mall in Al Ain. The amusement site provides a variety of leisure games and activities for children while complying with high standards of safety measures in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Malek Mansour, general manager at Adventureland, spoke of the collaboration with Semnox Solutions, commenting: "We are happy to work with the Semnox Solutions cashless system for the past six years. Their extensive support and timely completion of the projects has helped us in this business. We have always aimed to provide the best attractions to the kids in our area and Semnox has assisted us immensely to achieve this."

Meghashyam, client manager (MEA) of Semnox Solutions, said: "Adventureland has been one of our oldest and most valued clients in the UAE. Their impressive indoor activities have always attracted children and it seems to be the best place to hang out for families. And in the current situation, going cashless is the need of the hour and our system at Semnox serves this purpose with its RFID-enabled technology solutions helping businesses like Adventureland operate smoothly."

DXB Entertainments announces results for first nine months of 2020



DXB Entertainments, operator of Dubai Parks and Resorts, has announced its financial results for the first nine months of 2020.

The company had 602,000 visits during the first three quarters of the year, a decline of 67 per cent compared to the same period in 2019. DXB Entertainments also announced a 97 per cent year-on-year decline in revenue for the third quarter. However, the theme park operator reported a 21 per cent improvement in its EBITDA loss to reach Dhs54m during the same period.

DXB Entertainments' complex was closed from March until September in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The parks and resorts implemented an "efficiency programme" which led to a 54 per cent year-on-year cut in operating costs between January and September 2020.

DXB Entertainments has also confirmed a new "enhancement plan" is underway, which includes the installation of 10 new rides in Bollywood Parks Dubai and two rides at Motiongate Dubai.

The company is also preparing to open the region's first Legoland Hotel. The hotel was due to open in December 2020 and will feature more than 1,300 rooms. The Legoland Hotel will complement Legoland Dubai and Legoland Waterpark.

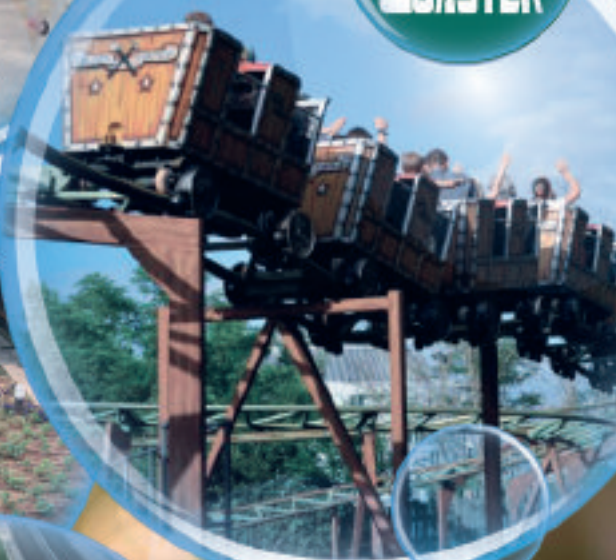
In other news from DXB, it was reported at the end of December that CEO Mohammed Almulla had resigned from his role, with CFO Remi Ishak being named as interim replacement.



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Managerial changes made at Dollywood

CHANGES in the leadership team at Dollywood theme park in Tennessee have been confirmed. Craig Ross is assuming a new leadership role, moving back to Herschend Family Entertainment, Dollywood's operating partner, as chief operating officer of the newly formed Herschend Growth and Opportunity Group.

The position will call on Ross' in-depth knowledge and expertise in operational management to support the acquisition of new theme parks, attractions and aquariums, as well as investment partners to fund expansion.

Commenting on the appointment, Dolly Parton said: "Craig Ross is a fine man and led my Dollywood companies to a time of great growth but he has some exciting new challenges and opportunities that can take Dollywood and all of my partners' businesses to an even higher level. I wish him well and will miss his day to day leadership but am excited about the future."

Also seeing a change of role at Dollywood is industry veteran Eugene Naughton, who will lead the theme park as president. In November 2019, Naughton joined Dollywood as vice-president of park operations. He has more than 30 years' experience in the industry, including leading roles at Six Flags parks and at Paramount.



Eugene Naughton

Walltopia creates world's biggest indoor ropes course

WALLTOPIA, manufacturer of climbing walls and active entertainment, has announced it is creating the biggest indoor ropes course in the world. This will be the second time Walltopia has built the world's largest ropes course, as the company will be breaking its own record.

Walltopia's latest achievement can be found at Play: CBUS, Ohio. The course boasts 129 different obstacles, 10 more than the previous record-holder, Walltopia's Summit Ropes course. Play: CBUS is Play Holdings' second Active Entertainment Centre designed and manufactured entirely by Walltopia.

As well as being home to the largest indoor ropes course in the world, the centre boasts two types of Ninja course. One is centred on giving visitors a challenge and physical exercise, with a boulder climbing wall for avid climbers, while the other course comprises fun walls and a kiddies ropes course for younger visitors. There is also a zipline for additional fun.

Konstantin Karamilov, product manager for Active Entertainment at Walltopia, commented: "To be honest, the most challenging part of a



big project like Play: CBUS is not the scale, but creating a mix of attractions that achieve the right balance between physical challenge and entertainment, for people of different ages and interests.



Tallest drop tower in the world is coming to Icon Park in 2021

ICON PARK, the amusement centre located on International Drive, Orlando, is gearing up for an exciting year in 2021, with the arrival of two new record-setting attractions – the Icon Park Slingshot and Icon Park Drop Tower.

Standing at 300ft, the Slingshot will be the tallest slingshot ride in the world. The two-tower ride will launch guests out of an "exploding volcano" 450ft into the air at speeds reaching 100 mph.

The Drop Tower will be the tallest free-standing drop tower globally, standing at a mighty 430ft. 30 riders will be rotated into the sky. Once they reach the top, they'll be tilted 30 degrees forward where they will briefly face the ground before free-falling 400ft at a top speed of 75mph.

Ritchie Armstrong, owner of Icon Park, said: "The Slingshot Group of companies is committed to bringing the biggest thrills to Orlando. We're very excited to open the world's tallest slingshot and free-standing drop tower at Icon Park to stand opposite the Orlando StarFlyer, the world's tallest swing ride."

The attractions are due to be launched at Icon Park in the summer of this year.

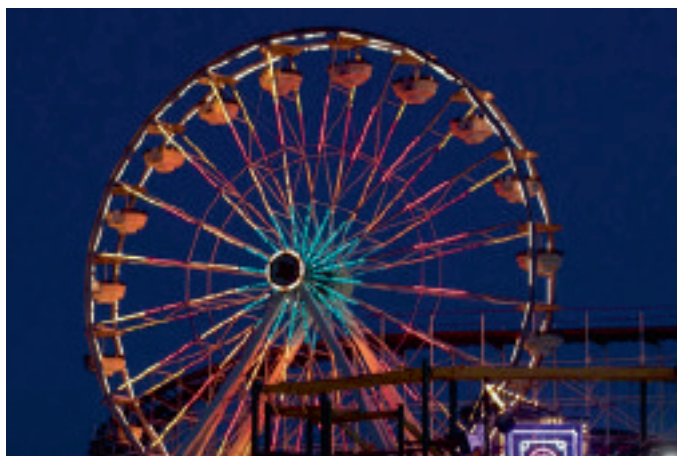
Two new rides set to debut Indiana Beach

TWO new rides are coming to the Boardwalk area of Indiana Beach, the amusement park located on Lake Shafer in Monticello, Indiana.

One of the new attractions will be the Polyp. Manufactured by Klaus, the ride features five arms with four cars attached to each arm. It travels in a circular motion, with each arm moving up and down. The Polyp is currently being restored; it was originally installed at Kiddieland Amusement Park, Melrose Park, Illinois, which is now closed.

Also coming to Indiana Beach is a Triple Loop coaster. The ride was designed and manufactured by Anton Schwarzkopf and will be the sixth coaster at Indiana Beach theme park. The attraction is 110ft tall and 2,444ft in length and can reach a top speed of 53mph.

Gene Staples, owner of Indiana Beach, commented on the new rides saying: "As we head into the off-season we are continuously looking for ways to improve our guest experiences. One important way is through the addition of new rides and attractions and we feel both of these rides are a great fit and complement our existing line up."



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Legoland Florida plans huge Project Venus expansion

PLANS are in motion to expand Legoland Florida with a 4.5 acre development. The expansion is known as Project Venus and according to permit requests, it will involve the current parking lot at the theme park being developed into a new attraction area.

Speculation is circulating that the new area will feature a roller coaster, a spin ride, a water play area and a drop tower attraction. Rumours are also in motion about the theming of the new area, with a space or mythical theme being flagged up, based on the name Project Venus.

Legoland Florida has yet to confirm the expansion and give any concrete details about the plans, but a spokesperson for the park hinted at an impending expansion, stating: "We're always looking for opportunities to build new attractions and experiences for families at Legoland Florida Resort as the ultimate vacation destination for kids. We're excited for our next 'big build' at the Legoland Florida Resort, but you'll have to wait until next year for more expansion news."

New attractions coming to Myrtle Beach

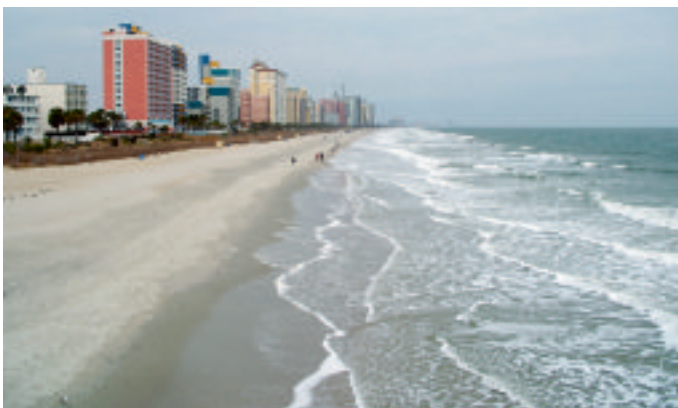
MYRTLE Beach, the holiday resort along South Carolina's Atlantic Coast, has announced it will be home to a series of new attractions and events in 2021.

New to the resort this year will be a Funplex Amusement Park, situated just a stone's throw from the beach. The park will boast a tropical theme and will feature seven original rides, including an interactive 360 degree jet simulator ride known as Mach Fun. The new park is due to open in the spring of 2021.

South Carolina's first ever man-made surf park is also coming to Myrtle Beach. Construction of the American Surf Park began in 2020 and it is expected to open in 2022. The surf park will feature a huge amphitheatre, alongside a surfing lagoon.

From June 10 to 13, the Carolina Country Music Festival will be taking place at Myrtle Beach. The festival will attract more than 30 artists from the country genre, including Eric Church, Luke Combs and Kelsea Ballerini.

Le Grand Cirque 2.0 show is also set to debut at Myrtle Beach. The performance centred predominantly on acrobatics, will run from June 1 until October 3.



Jurassic Quest drive-thru experience to tour Southern California

THE Jurassic Quest drive-thru experience, featuring over 70 photorealistic dinosaurs, is coming to Southern California in 2021.

Los Angeles, Orange County and San Diego will welcome what is the largest touring dinosaur exhibition in the US. The car parking areas of four different venues in Southern California will be transformed into an interactive drive-thru experience and guests will get up close to over 70 life-like and moving dinosaurs. These, along with a huge Megalodon over 50ft in length, will be displayed in various authentic scenes.

Visitors will also be able to meet baby dinosaurs, as well as the team of dinosaur trainers responsible for bringing the authenticity of the dinos to life. There will also be photo opportunities available, all while adhering to COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

The Jurassic Quest drive-thru tour was launched in the US in mid-July 2020. More than 1.5m people in 300,000 vehicles have attended the experience in a wealth of locations, including New York, Dallas, Philadelphia and Boston.



Kings Island Camp Cedar to open in spring 2021

CONSTRUCTION of the new luxury resort known as Kings Island Camp Cedar in Mason, Ohio, is underway. The \$27m resort is due to open in the spring.

The site will feature 73 modern cottages offering accommodation, as well as 164 full-service RV spaces. Guests will be able to enjoy outdoor entertainment, including pools, ponds, walking trails and unique dining options. The new luxury facility will extend over 50 acres of land.

The resort is owned by Small Brothers, LLC and Terra Firma Associations. It will be managed by Cedar Fair Entertainment Company, owner of the Kings Island amusement park.

Mike Koontz, vice-president and general manager of Kings Island, commented: "We are excited to offer our guests a unique lodging experience and a contemporary outdoor retreat so close to Kings Island. The addition of Kings Island Camp Cedar luxury outdoor resort will make a visit to our park even more memorable."



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4D FREE SPIN COASTER

at Motiongate in Dubai, UAE

AIR LAUNCH COASTER

at Changsha Window of the World, located in Changsha, Hunan, China

COMBO TOWER

at Ocean Flower Island in Danzhou, China

COMBO TOWER

Hainan Ocean Paradise in Lingshui, China

SPACE SHOT

at Chongqing Sunac Land in Chongqing, China

4D FREE SPIN COASTER

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Australia's Village Roadshow Limited to be taken over by BGH

FOLLOWING a 12-month battle, it has been confirmed that the private equity company BGH is to take over Australia's \$440m Village Roadshow Limited (VRL).

BGH had been head-to-head with Pacific Equity Partners (PEP) in the bid to take over Village Roadshow, operators of Australian theme parks and cinemas. BGH's acquisition of Village Roadshow marks the end of years of uncertainty and stand-offs over the future of the company, which had a damaging impact on its finances. VRL has been further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with its cinemas and theme parks being forced to close throughout the year.

At the end of October 2020, Village Roadshow said its net debt was around \$311m. This figure is expected to rise to \$380m by June 2021.

VRL was founded in 1954 as a drive-in cinema. Today, it owns a vast portfolio of entertainment venues, including 57 cinemas and many high-profile theme parks, including Sea World and Warner Bros. Movie World on Australia's Gold Coast.



ITEC Entertainment opens new office in Osaka, Japan

ITEC Entertainment, a leader in the creation of innovative solutions for the entertainment, leisure and hospitality industries, is opening a new office in Osaka, Japan. The opening of the new premises is testament to the company's global expansion.



With an office in Osaka, ITEC will be able to address new opportunities to expand its focus on the entertainment, leisure and hospitality industries in the region. Steve Alkhoa, executive vice-president of engineering – Asia Pacific for ITEC Technologies, will lead the growth in the area

and develop ITEC's 35-year heritage in creating engineering systems for demanding and complex projects around the world.

Talking about the opening of the new office, Alkhoa said: "Our expanded presence in Asia better serves our existing and future clients and helps us be even more responsive and strategic in that support."

"Carefully orchestrated technologies and control systems are vital to the rich guest experiences ITEC Entertainment creates and the opening of this office marks a new level of ITEC's commitment to foster even closer collaboration between our employees, our clients and projects in this important region," Alkhoa added.



Christie laser projections create spectacular visuals at Yinji Animal Kingdom

CHRISTIE Digital Systems USA, a global visual and audio technologies company, is making an impact at Yinji Animal Kingdom theme park in Xinmi, China. The company's laser projection solutions are impressing visitors at the new animal theme park.

The attraction site is home to more than 3,000 rare animals, which live in ecological environments that resemble their natural habitats. The park combines cultural tourism with state-of-the-art visual technologies, including projections on a 45m high Tree of Life sculpture and a 350-seat 4D theatre.

Christie is working alongside Wincomn Technology to create the projection projects. Eight Christie Crimson Series projectors light up the Tree of Life's huge trunk, which boasts a 26m diameter, with bold and flamboyant visuals. At the 4D Theatre, Wincomn has deployed four D4K40-RGB projectors to illuminate a huge curved screen, which measures 30m in length and eight metres in height.

Tony Chen, general manager of Wincomn Technology, commented on the projects, saying: "As the projection systems are integrated into two of the most popular attractions in Yinji Animal Kingdom, we have spared no effort to deliver bold, colourful visuals that elevate the visitor experience to new levels."

Legacy Entertainment teams with Enlight Media on new development

ENLIGHT Media, an investment, production and TV programme distribution company in China, is to proceed with the development of a movie-inspired theme park in Yangzhou, eastern China.

Enlight Media has confirmed Legacy Entertainment will be designing the park's Enlight Epicenter feature. Plans for the theme park, which is known as Enlight Movie World, were first announced in 2018. The development will require an investment of around \$2.5 billion.

The park will cover an area of 651 acres and feature attractions and experiences based on Enlight's well-known animated film properties. Themed dining and retail will also be available at the site, alongside an entertainment centre and a series of Art Gardens.

In a statement, Eric Carnagey, Legacy's managing director and co-owner, said: "Unlike studio-themed parks in America and Europe, which tend to look towards the past, the relative youth of China's homegrown IP-based LBE industry is all about looking forward."

A completion date for Enlight Movie World has not yet been confirmed.





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Hong Kong Disneyland Resort unveils Castle of Magical Dreams

HONG Kong Disneyland has initiated its 15th birthday milestone celebrations with the launch of the reimagined Castle of Magical Dreams. To honour the

occasion, Hong Kong Disneyland invited the local community to be part of the festivities.

When passing through the resort's magical gates, visitors at the commemorative event were immediately drawn to the 15th anniversary decoration alongside the beats of the official 15th anniversary song, Love the Memory. The melodies filled the forecourt of the castle, which was turned into a stage for the celebrations. The event was hosted by Stephanie Young, managing director of Hong Kong Disneyland Resort.

The Castle of Magical Dreams has undergone a spectacular transformation. The reimagined castle is now the centrepiece of Hong Kong Disneyland Resort. It is inspired by 13 stories of Disney queens and princesses and the design resonates the unique characteristics of iconic Disney characters and their stories. New experiences await guests visiting the castle, including meeting their favourite queens and princesses at the Royal Reception Hall.

During the commemorative event, Stephanie Young told visitors: "Looking at how beautiful this new castle is, there is no better way to celebrate this proud milestone. Over the past 15 years, we have helped create countless memories, granted numerous wishes and shared smiles together with our guests and cast members."



New attractions set to bring timely boost to Gold Coast theme parks

WORK is well underway on the construction of the new \$20m Leviathan roller coaster at Sea World in Queensland, Australia. The attraction is located at the theme park's Main Beach site on the Gold Coast.

Leviathan will be the first new wooden coaster to be constructed in Australia for nearly 40 years. It will also be the world's first wooden coaster with backward-facing seats.

Standing 32m high, Leviathan is the stand-out attraction at Sea World's New Atlantis precinct. The new precinct will also be home to the Trident which will lift and spin passengers 52m into the air. The New Atlantis project is costing \$50m and is due to be completed in time for the 2021 winter school holidays in Australia.

The pandemic has cost the Gold Coast around \$3.5 billion in tourism expenditure, a decrease of 60 per cent on 2019 figures. However, the new Precinct project is poised to be a game changer for tourism on the Gold Coast, helping to attract visitors back to the famous Sea World theme park.

Plans are also in motion for other new attractions at the region's Wet 'n' Wild and Movie World sites.

Clark Kirby, Village Roadshow Theme Parks CEO said: "For the long-term recovery, we have a continued focus on investment and growth with a number of larger attractions planned."

WA Museum Boola Bardip opens in Perth

THE WA Museum Boola Bardip has officially opened in Perth, Australia. The A\$400 million museum features exhibitions and experiences celebrating the stories and culture of Western Australia.

WA Museum Boola Bardip features eight permanent exhibition galleries, as well as learning studios, a special exhibition gallery, retail, public spaces and F&B. The museum is a new milestone for the cultural institutions in Perth which collectively form the Perth Cultural Centre.

The new museum was designed and constructed by managing contractor Multiplex in alliance with architect companies Hassell and OMA. The project involved renovating five heritage buildings to form the new building for WA Museum Boola Bardip.

Mark McGowan, premier of Western Australia, commented: "The new WA Museum Boola Bardip is simply spectacular. I have no doubt Western Australians will be blown away by its stunning architecture and fascinating exhibits. It is a world-class museum by any standard and one that we can all be proud of."



Covid-19 pandemic delays opening of Japan's Super Mario theme park for the second time

THE opening of the highly awaited Super Mario theme park in Japan has been delayed again as the nation fights against a surge in Covid-19 cases.

Nintendo's theme park was due to open in July 2020 ahead of the Tokyo Olympics. It was originally delayed because of the outbreak of the pandemic and rescheduled to open in February 2021.

Following the Japanese government's decision to extend a virus state of emergency to Osaka after the number of positive Covid-19 cases surged in the area, the opening of the theme park has been delayed for a second time.

In a statement, Universal Studios Japan said: "We sincerely apologise for the trouble caused to guests... who were looking forward to the opening. The opening date will be decided and announced after the state of emergency is lifted."

The Super Mario theme park features a real-life Bowser's Castle. An interactive Mario Kart ride is another key attraction at the amusement site.



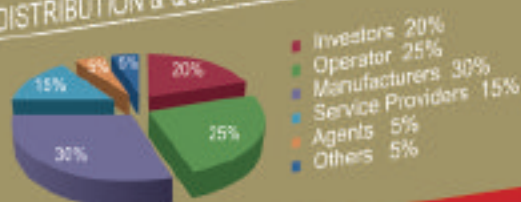
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Universal Beijing Resort to open in May 2021

UNIVERSAL Beijing Resort is set to open in May 2021. Construction is in full swing and the park is preparing to be operational in the spring.

Universal Beijing Resort will feature many iconic zones and attractions, including Jurassic World, Transformers and Harry Potter. The major construction phase of the park is now complete and work is being carried out on the detail and finishing touches to the themed zones, rides and facilities. Casting for entertainment staff is already underway, with training and rehearsals due to take place in the forthcoming months.

Construction of the park has involved more than 100,000 construction workers, over 500 global partners and suppliers, as well as more than 500 designers and artists.

Tom Mehrmann, general manager of Beijing International Resort Co. Ltd. Theme Park and Resort Management branch, said: "We are now entering the stage of full operations preparations to ensure a one-of-a-kind experience for guests from China and beyond as we prepare for the opening in 2021."



Construction of Sunac Ice and Snow World in Xi'an underway

CONSTRUCTION of the Sunac Ice and Snow World at Xi'an International Trade and Logistics Park is now underway.

The project has an investment of CNY5 billion (\$774m). The site covers an area of more than 30,000sq.m and will provide visitors with all-weather ice and snow throughout the year. The resort will integrate sports, entertainment, skiing and more.

As well as a skiing area, there will be an exhibition centre featuring animation-themed ice sculptures. There will also be a zone designated to snow and a snow entertainment area.

Sunac Ice and Snow World is expected to welcome more than 500,000 visitors annually. The project will provide north west China with a high quality, professional indoor ice and snow venue.



Trial operation of Zhengzhou Haichang Ocean Park to begin in late 2021

HAICHANG Holdings Company has announced there will be a soft opening of Zhengzhou Haichang Ocean Park at the end of 2021.

The park will comprise three major areas – the Ocean Park, Polar Park and Future Exploration World. The resort will also be home to ocean-themed hotels and commercial districts, which will provide visitors with leisure experiences of an ocean culture.

Zhengzhou Haichang Ocean Park will cover an area of 640 acres. The site is said to have an investment of CNY4 billion (\$619m) and construction is expected to take around 24 months. Upon completion, the park will be a flagship ocean park in Central China. It is expected the tourist destination will welcome more than three million guests each year.

Legoland Shanghai Resort to open in 2024



MERLIN Entertainments has announced that Legoland Shanghai Resort is expected to open in 2024. The building of what will be one of the largest Legoland's in the world is due to start in 2021.

Legoland Shanghai will feature a 250-room, fully themed hotel upon opening. Leading creative, design and construction teams will work together to create an immersive theme park, which will be centred on the scenic spots of Shanghai, the Jinshan District and the town of Fengjing. The park will be located in the Jinshan District in south west Shanghai.

China is a focus of development and investment for Merlin Entertainments. Since 2018, the company has opened five attractions in China, including the first Peppa Pig World of Play in Shanghai and the Little BIG City in Beijing.

Nick Varney, chief executive of Merlin Entertainments, said: "China represents a great opportunity for strong global brands and I am delighted to work with our partners to bring one of the world's largest Legoland resorts to Shanghai, which builds on the other attractions we have developed in this exciting part of the country."

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WATERPARKS



Europe's first Wavegarden Cove is near completion

THE first Wavegarden Cove in Europe is almost complete. In January this year, Alaia Bay in Sion, Switzerland, began to fill its 8,500sq.m Wavegarden Cove surfing lagoon.

Construction of Alaia Bay surfing lagoon started in November 2019. The filling part of the project started in December 2020 and tests of the wave generating machinery commenced in January 2020. In March this year the park will welcome its first surfers, who will test the facility.

Adam Bonvin, founder of Alaia Bay surfing lagoon, said: "Our teams have put a lot of enthusiasm into this project and we are thrilled to be able to keep the schedule as planned. Despite the public health situation, which required the introduction of certain restrictions, there has been very little disruption to the construction and we can now reveal the dates for the next stages of the project."

As well as being home to the first Wavegarden Cove in Europe, Alaia Bay will feature a surf school, restaurant and retail space.

ProSlide launches WaterKINGDOM product range

PROSLIDE Technology has announced a new product range. The new WaterKINGDOM rides and aquatic play structures mark an investment in water attractions for children.

Speaking of the new product range, Ray Smegal, CCO at ProSlide, said: "We're thrilled to bring full-ProSlide innovation to our new WaterKINGDOM platform of water rides, aquatic play structures, water ride complexes and play features.

"WaterKINGDOM is a water park in a water park that is specifically designed for kids and families. ProSlide WaterKINGDOM includes the most innovative rides and technology and it will transform the family experience at waterparks," Smegal added.

ProSlide's WaterKINGDOM structures are tailored to the individual needs of specific parks and are equipped with a built-in expansion strategy.



SeaTREK underwater experience launched at Mississippi Aquarium

MISSISSIPPI Aquarium has launched the highly anticipated SeaTREK experience.

Designed by Sub Sea Systems, the helmet diving experience enables visitors to swim among the sea-life and become part of the aquarium's underwater habitat in a near zero-gravity system. Divers will get up close to the diverse range of fish and sea-life on display at the aquarium, including sharks, rays and much more.

The underwater experience lasts for approximately 20 minutes and is available for guests over the age of 10. Using specialised SeaTREK diving helmets, non-swimmers can join in and multi-generations can walk underwater in a fully guided tour.

The SeaTREK experience is the largest guided helmet diving programme in the world, available in 27 countries on five continents. Jeff Gibula, director of facility operations at Mississippi Aquarium, said: "We are excited to launch the SeaTREK experience. This allows guests the unique opportunity to experience marine life up close, in our main habitat."



WhiteWater opens new European headquarters

WHITEWATER, a global leader in the design and manufacture of water attractions, is opening a new European headquarters in Munich, Germany. The opening of the new office is part of WhiteWater's bid to extend its presence in the Europe, Russia and Africa (ERA) region.

The new premises will be centred on implementing a new strategy of locals for locals. The expanded team will be lead by Rainer Maelzer. The team will comprise designers, business development managers, project managers, slide path engineers, site supervisors and after-sales specialists.

The new ERA team is aimed at leading the market with a diverse and comprehensive portfolio of products in the industry. As Rainer Maelzer, president of WhiteWater ERA GmbH commented: "The opening of WhiteWater's new office in Munich is a great demonstration of our dedication to the region; we wanted to have a local European full service company to underpin our corporate strategy of supporting locals for local."

Continuing its presence in the Mediterranean with executive vice-president Grant Poje remaining in Barcelona, the new office in Germany will be the sixth global location for WhiteWater.





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WATERPARKS



Kalahari Round Rock Resort opens in Texas

THE Kalahari Round Rock Resort indoor waterpark has opened in Texas. The 350 acre, African-themed complex features 20 swimming pools and whirlpools, 30 waterslides, a rock-climbing wall, cabanas, waterfalls and an adult grotto swim-up bar.

What has been hailed as one of "America's largest indoor waterparks" is located just north of Austin. In terms of size, the only indoor waterpark larger than the one at Kalahari Round Rock is the 370,260 sq.ft DreamWorks in New Jersey.

As well as the indoor waterpark, the Kalahari Round Rock Resort is expected to have 975 guest rooms, 10,000 sq.m of retail space, five restaurants and 200,00 sq.ft of meeting space for events and conventions.

Todd Nelson, owner of Kalahari, said: "We have 1.5m sq.ft of space to play and room to roam. It's been a challenging year and what better way to get away from the worry and enjoy time having fun together as a family and community."

The African-themed resort also features 22 life-size structures throughout the resort, including 12 elephants, seven zebras, a mother and baby rhinoceros and a cape buffalo.

Proposal submitted for new waterpark in Kingston, Australia

A PROPOSAL for the building of a new waterpark known as Surf n Play Aqua Park has been submitted for approval by the city of Kingston, Australia.

The waterpark will be centred on a surf theme, with a zone for beginner surfers. The main surf area will be designated for more competent surfers. The park's surf pool will be capable of creating waves as large as six feet every minute.

Alongside the state-of-the-art surf pool, the waterpark will be home to a range of rides and attractions for all the family, including water jet-powered slides, tunnel rides, a lazy river, an aquarium, beach pool and more.

The Surf n Play Aqua Park is set to be the largest indoor-outdoor waterpark in the southern hemisphere.



SeaWorld San Antonio to operate year-round in 2021

SEAWORLD San Antonio in Texas is to stay open all year for the first time in more than a decade. The park will be operating earlier than normal this year, as it will be open in the months of January and February.

The year-round operation will see the return of Wild Days in January, which celebrates wild animals and wild coasters and SeaWorld San Antonio's sustained commitment to animal conservation. Wild Days will feature themed conservation events and up-close experiences with the animals.

New to this year's event's calendar will be Mardi Gras celebrations in February. The celebrations will include a New Orleans' style carnival with live music and flamboyant costumes, alongside Mardi Gras inspired culinary delights such as po-boys, dirty rice and shrimp and andouille skewers.

The Mardi Gras celebrations will take place from February 6 to 28 and the park will continue to follow strict health and safety measures to help keep guests and staff safe. The measures will include temperature checks, enhanced cleaning and sanitation, mandatory face coverings and limitations to daily capacity to maintain safe physical distancing.



Construction of Dubai's Jungle Bay waterpark well underway

WHITEWATER has announced construction work is well underway on a new waterpark on the beach at Mina Seyahi, Dubai.

Known as Jungle Bay, the waterpark is inspired by the Cyclades, boasting a clean, minimalist design. The park will feature rides and attractions for all ages, including Whizzard and Body Slides, the Lighthouse Mat Racer ride, an AquaPlay structure, a six metre pneumatic wave pool and more. Guests will be able to enjoy food and refreshments at the Refuel Café and Bar.

Jungle Bay can be accessed exclusively by guests staying at the Westin Mina Seyahi and Le Meridien Mina Seyahi hotels. The Mina Seyahi area of Dubai extends across part of Jumeirah Beach and the recently developed Dubai Harbour. The harbour is home to a state-of-the-art cruise terminal and the largest marina in the region.

Mike Rigby, executive vice-president, Middle East and India, for WhiteWater, commented on the project, saying: "We're delighted to be working with such a prestigious hotel brand on this exciting new project, which we're sure will add immeasurable value to the property's proposition for guests."





www.watertoys.com
info@watertoys.com
1 866 833 8580 | 905 649 5047



2020 Asia Attractions Summit and Golden Crown Awards Ceremony

DECEMBER 10, 2020, saw over 200 theme park representatives, experts and suppliers attend the 2020 *Asia Attractions Summit and Golden Crown Awards* ceremony, presented by *Asia Attractions* at the Enjoy Snow Hotel, Henan, Zhengzhou, China. The attendance and scale of the event set a new record compared to previous years.

By holding this event each year and now for five consecutive years, *Asia Attractions* is seeking to celebrate development and new opportunities in the

cultural tourism industry in China, as well as wishing to thank and recognise groups and individuals who have been actively involved in the business and have helped shape the future of the industry in China. Guests shared cutting-edge concepts, integrated innovative wisdom and took the opportunity to communicate, discuss, build and offer suggestions for the sustainable development of China's cultural travel industry.

The *Asia Attractions Golden Crown Awards 2020* officially launched in August and a total of 56 awards were set up in four categories, including Outstanding Suppliers, Outstanding Chinese Parks Operators, Outstanding Industry Leaders and Managers and Recognition of Outstanding Suppliers of the Decade. The awards cover planning, designing, construction, amusement suppliers and services, etc. All the projects shortlisted had to be completed between June 2019 and November 2020 in China to qualify for entry.

Since August 2020, over 40 Chinese industry professionals and more than 300 theme parks and global suppliers applied for the awards. Finally, at the gala dinner night, 65 international suppliers, 46 Chinese theme parks and 26 industry professionals shared the awards. The results consisted of two parts – offline voting by the 60-member judging panel and public voting on the WeChat platform.

Zhao WenJing





Asia Attractions Summit

Also during the day of December 10, *Asia Attractions* held a summit for the development of and new opportunities in the cultural tourism industry. Zhao Wenjing, chief consultant of Haichang Ocean Park Holdings Co. Ltd. and vice-president of Chinese trade association CAAPA, delivered the opening presentation, saying: "2020 is a year of both opportunities and challenges. In China, through the timely adjustment of development strategies and



Rong ZhiGang



active exploration of new roads, the cultural and tourism industry has obtained good market feedback after the industry has recovered. Standing at a new starting point, we need cutting-edge, rich experience and knowledge to enhance and boost the development of enterprises and individuals; we need professional and authoritative awards to encourage and commend the progress of enterprises and individuals; we need high-quality, typical enterprises and character benchmarks to lead the take-off of Chinese cultural tourism."

Later in the keynote speech session, Zheng Wei, general manager of Shenzhen Huachuang Tourism Consulting Management Co. Ltd., gave a speech on the subject of The New Development Trend in the Chinese Cultural Tourism Industry after the Epidemic. He pointed out that the development of China's cultural and tourism industry after the epidemic will be based on the new perception of "change vs. unchanged."

Liu Yuzheng, the founder of Shanghai Xia Dan Creative Design Co. Ltd., shared his opinion about the Internal Cycle of Economic Development, the New Economy of Urban Cultural Tourism. He conducted an in-depth analysis under the background of internal economic circulation, while Wu Jinhui, deputy general manager of Xiangyang Happy Valley, gave a keynote speech entitled the Practice and Exploration of Waterpark All-season Operation, in which he introduced the "transformation journey" of Magic Beach in Xiangyang Happy Valley.

Zhang Min, the vice-president of Sanderson Art, also delivered a keynote speech on New Trends in Cultural Tourism Development: Experience and Innovation of Urban Leisure and Entertainment. Within this he analysed the travel data during the National Day holiday before and after the pandemic and pointed out that high end products will emerge alongside high ranking and high experience products.

Towards the end of the day, a roundtable forum was joined by Min Min (vice-president of Jianye Real Estate Group and general manager of the cultural tourism

company), Wang Lijuan (general manager of the Dinosaur Park Cultural Tourism Group), Wang Yuan (Shanshui Shengdian Cultural Industry Co. Ltd.), Wang Peng (vice-president of Huaying Cultural Tourism Group) and Chen Chi (founder and producer/director of Beijing Wuwei Vision). The discussion was focused on the development and potential of live shows in theme parks.

After the summit, and a short rest, the guests also visited Enjoy Animal Kingdom and Enjoy Snow World.

The next *Asia Attractions* Golden Crown Outstanding Suppliers and Parks Awards and summit will launch in July this year. The ceremony is scheduled to take place on December 2. For more information concerning application dates and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Ms. Han Zhao at han@leisureandattractions.com



Wang Yuan

About *Asia Attractions*

Asia Attractions is the leading business magazine for the amusement industry in China and a sister publication to InterPark, providing Chinese and international news, interviews, insight, features and reports covering the Chinese attractions and amusement industry since 2012. After eight years, the *Asia Attractions* brand has developed a network of magazines, online conference, annual catalogue, website, self-media platform and WeChat platform. It has been well recognised by most Chinese investors, operators and manufacturers, including Chimelong, DreamEast, Enjoy Land, Evergrande, Fanta, HaiChang, Hua Yi Brother Studio, OCT, Sunac and more, along with many suppliers around the world who do business within the Chinese market.

Delegates visited
Enjoy Animal Park
after the summit





*Launch your new products or
projects to the Chinese market
with Asia Attractions*



FOLLOWING the cancellation of last November's IAAPA Expo in Florida, from where we would usually have reported on the latest news from a variety of manufacturers and suppliers on the trade show floor, InterPark has spoken to a number of companies about their latest products and projects, in addition to gaining an insight from some on how the global pandemic has impacted their businesses. Here we report on what they had to say.

Mack introduces hybrid coaster train vehicle option

GERMAN manufacturer Mack Rides has introduced new hybrid train feature for its roller coaster trains.

As a leader in the design and production of spinning coasters – be it a controlled spin such as that on the Euromir attraction at Europa-Park, German, a combination of both controlled and free spinning as on the Cobra's Curse coaster at Busch Gardens Tampa, US, or the free spinning version as will feature on the new Storm Chaser at Paultons Park in the UK which opens later this year – the company has now taken the genre a step further with the Xtreme spinning coaster that is an LSM launch looping coaster with free spinning gondolas.

Following tests of the new concept on Europa-Park's Bluefire coaster, Mack "learned a lot" in that an existing launch coaster can be upgraded with the spinning car option.

Explaining further, Mack's Maximilian Roeser told InterPark: "In order to provide such a vehicle we developed a new hybrid train option with a replacement for the last coach of a Mack launch coaster train to be transformed to a free spinning two-seater coach. This test was so successful and the response from the market so great that we are now offering this option to many of our existing launch coasters and mega coasters. Due to the surrounding environment and theming not every coaster can be equipped with that seating system but we feel that we will see such an option much more in the future offering operators

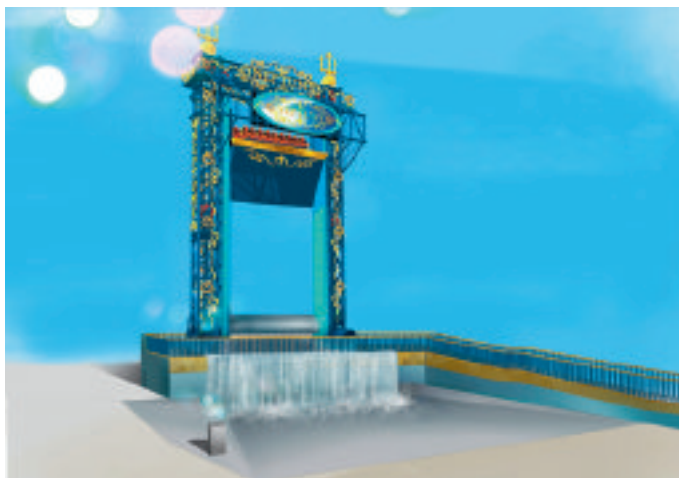
the chance to have an additional ride feature, even the possibility of an upcharge attraction.

"Even when you ride a coaster over and over again, nothing is more thrilling than a ride where you don't know where you are facing the next time you ride," Roeser added.



Zamperla moving ahead with new products and developments

DESPITE the on-going uncertainties created by the global pandemic, Zamperla continues to forge ahead with a variety of new products and company developments in 2021.



For example, the spotlight will once again be shining on the Zamperla Coaster Department with three new products due to be presented to the market this year. Additionally, more thrills will be on offer via a number of attractions, including the new Big WaveZ, which offers an interactive experience embodying the ideal combination of a classic shoot-the-cute ride and a drop tower.

The Big WaveZ takes passengers 15m high to the top of a tower, where an engaging game experience begins, during which riders take full control of their destiny depending on their interactions and game dynamics. Z+ sensors and cameras register every single movement of the riders, a feature that enables the attraction experience to be different each time and maximises its customisation. The end of the ride, and the concluding big splash, is also in the hands of passengers and varies depending on the outcome of the optional game section.

For Zamperla it will also be a year of research and innovation, internal development and "sensitive issues such as inclusiveness, accessibility to parks and ride safety, all of which are dear to us, especially concerning the difficult period we are still facing," the company states.

Furthermore, Zamperla told InterPark: "We hope 2021 will be more magnanimous with the parks reopening, including Zamperla amusement parks Luna Farm in Italy and Luna Park in Coney Island, New York. We will give our very best – we are ready with a support plan for our customers and our amusement parks around the world to provide full support in anticipation of the reopening, in complete safety."

Intamin set for 'exciting' year of openings

DESPITE the difficulties caused by the current worldwide pandemic, 2021 is set to be an exciting year for Intamin with a number of significant ride openings due to take place.

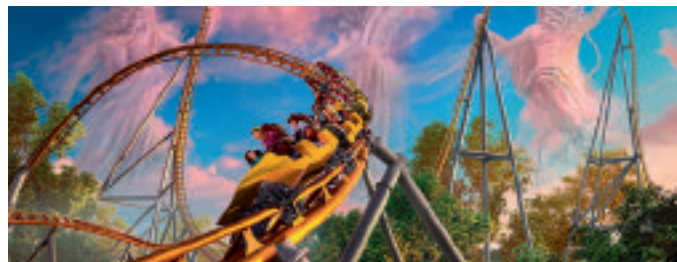
At Walibi Belgium, the 50m high Kondaa Mega Coaster is expected to open in April, although the exact date is yet to be confirmed, while in May at Vulcania in France, Namazu, a family launch coaster incorporating a freefall drop, is due to open. The attraction will take riders along a 584m long track and will also feature two launches. The end of May/beginning of June is also set to see the debut of the new Multi-Dimensional coaster at Movie Park Germany.

In China, at Ocean Paradise Hainan in the early part of 2021, three new rides are due to open, these being a vertical lift coaster, a spinning coaster and a Coaster Wheel, while in the Middle East and Far East Intamin is expecting to open a total of three Surf Rider attractions. In Australia, the Hot Racer at Luna Park is due to open at the end of 2021.

In the US, at Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Pantheon is set to make its debut, this being an opening postponed from 2020. The ride will feature

15 air-time hills, two inversions, a 95 degree drop and multiple forward and backward launches and has a Roman Gods theme. And also in the US, the much anticipated VelociCoaster at Universal Studios Islands of Adventure in Florida is due to open this year.

"With all these openings 2021 is going to be an exciting year," notes Intamin's Michèle Jehle, who added that out of all the negativity surrounding the pandemic, one positive element has been that Intamin has had time to work on further developments which will be revealed soon on social media channels where the company is working to have a stronger presence.



Intamin's Pantheon coaster is due to open at Busch Garden Williamsburg in 2021

Well-known names continue to choose Empex Watertoys

WITH recent installations including well-known hospitality names such as Hilton, Westin, Holiday Inn, Novotel, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, MCS Cruise Lines, Warner Bros. Parks and Canada's Wonderland, Empex Watertoys has continued to provide ergonomically designed splash parks and water features throughout 2020.



Empex splash parks utilise various animated Aquadecks, Aquajets and above ground Aquatons water features, as well as interactive Watertoys and Aquanetics in order to create vibrant and educational water activity areas for children.

Newly themed water feature categories now available include Aquacircus, Aquatropica, Aquazoo, Aquamar and Aquamotivs, Aquaspeed, Aquawest, Aquafarm, Aquacastle, Aquagalaxy, Aquadolce, Aquabild and Aquaflite. Ergonomically designed for safety, the products are non-metal providing low electrical and heat conductivity; fabricated of rugged, corrosion free, speciality plastics for use in chlorinated water. Much lighter than metal, installations of Empex features do not require elaborate foundations or embedded anchors. Completely surface mounted, the features are easily retrofitted to existing water supplies or interchanged to vary the splash park design from year to year.

Empex products are created from extremely strong reinforced composite plastics and are available in a variety of standard and custom shapes with the Empex colour signature, creating a dynamic and colourful water playground.

Rolba Loisir adds to Spain's Aquabrava Park

The Spanish company Rolba Loisir is currently working on a large project in Roses, Spain, in the province of Gerona in the north of Barcelona.

The Extreme Park Aquabrava is due to open in the summer at Aquabrava Park Roses and explaining further, Rolba Loisirs' David Cappelletti told InterPark: "The project has been carefully considered to combine the safety of the users of this new part of the park with access controlled by an important automatic system. The client Mr. Eric Bos, owner of the Aquabrava Park, wanted to carry out this type of project for some time but with well-calculated security and careful testing beforehand. It is a project which is a park in an existing park with very new sensations."

"We worked together on almost 30 versions before arriving at the one which is currently being finished. The current tests are very conclusive and provide a good prospect for the Aquabrava Park very soon."

And Cappelletti continued: "We have incorporated nine slides with slopes of almost 130 per cent on the fastest slides. Access to the departure area for all the slides is via a suspension bridge of more than 25m in length above the reception pool to give customers a spirit of adventure."

"We have also incorporated into the project on an Aquawhizz slide an over 13m long transparent acrylic tube section where customers will have the joy of seeing the users of the slide pass by. Guaranteed entertainment and an adrenaline rush!"

The installation also features "a wall of jumps" with three balconies at different heights from where guests begin their ride. "The pool depth at the end of these slides was a key element in the design to meet European standards and also for the safety of the most extreme customers," Cappelletti states. The whole project has been designed to be compact in an area of 2,000sq.m excluding beaches

Rolba Loisir is also currently working on a new concept of boat conveyor for waterparks.



HEXaFLITE®2.0 and FUNRIDE success for Simtec

FOLLOWING more than 15 successful HEXaFLITE® Flying Theatre installations worldwide, Simtec's engineers were challenged to develop an even more spectacular HEXaFLITE® system, the result being the HEXaFLITE®2.0 which offers several brand new features.

These include the motion system being capable of starting in the loading position and the seats tilting back to allow guests to face the theatre ceiling where optional additional projections and decoration can be added to enhance the experience.

A further enhancement is the use of spherical LED screens instead of screens and projection systems. These LED screens provide pin sharp pictures and were first successfully used in Sunac Land Wuxi and Guangzhou in 2019, followed by system handovers in Kunming, Chengdu and Chongqing in 2020, all in China.

Another HEXaFLITE®2.0 sales contract signed in 2020 was for a 48-seat system with special effects. The project will be implemented in the greater area of Macau, China, in 2022.

Simtec has also added further to its product offering in recent times with the FUNRIDE 21 Closed Cabin Simulator (CCS), which complements the FUNRIDE Open Cabin Simulator (OCS). This version features audio/video systems on board and the FUNRIDE systems are available in sizes from two to 100 guests.

Additionally, Simtec has been selected as the supplier for the main attraction at OCT Happy Valley's newly developed Super Wings real-world themed area in Chongqing, China.

The key attraction of the new area will be the Ledi Secret Mission simulator ride, for which Simtec will supply three FUNRIDE open cabin simulators with 21 seats each. The opening of the new Super Wings area is planned for 2021.



Severn Lamb to supply themed trains to Qatar waterpark

WITH a well established reputation of delivering world-class products and services around the globe, UK based Severn Lamb recently announced its involvement with the Qetaifan Island North Waterpark in Qatar.

The company is to supply two highly themed rail trains to the new park which is scheduled to open in 2021. The project demonstrates Severn Lamb's versatility and creativity, combining a battery-electric rolling chassis from one of its core rail trains with custom-built bodywork to allow the trains to take on the look of 1950s oil tankers.

Elsewhere, the company was awarded the prestigious contract to design and build replacement trains for Southend-on-Sea pier in the UK. Having delivered the existing vehicles 33 years ago, a testament to their build quality, the company will now be creating the next generation of vehicles in 2021. A fully customised design to meet the pier's specific needs, the innovative new trains include a lithium-ion battery powertrain, an ultra-modern interior with low-floor access, operational speeds of up to 30km/h (19mph) and capacity for 200-plus passengers to match the increased popularity of the pier and its amenities.

Additional projects in the UK for 2021 include a new electric road train for Nottingham Castle, which is due for delivery in March, and two new land trains for Kew Gardens in London.



A concept image of the Qetaifan Waterpark Tanker Train

Worldwide installations for ProSlide

PROSLIDE has been involved in a number of worldwide installations in the past year.

In the USA alone there have been 10 installations at parks from SeaWorld to Six Flags to Oceans Breeze and Raging Waves, to name a few, across California, Florida, Illinois, Colorado, New York and Georgia. Outside of North America, ProSlide has also seen installations in Australia, China, Dominican Republic, Trinidad, UAE and Spain.

Notable rides featured at these locations include the Tornado 60, PIPELine, FlyingSAUCER, Twister, Mammoth, OctopusRACER, RocketBLAST, RallyRACER and more. In Spain, at the Aquadiver Platja d'ari park in Girona, the first ever Kidz Zone in Europe has been implemented, this including a KIDZ TornadoWAVE, KIDZ TORNADO 18 and a Twister.



Huss 'confident for the coming year'

GERMAN ride manufacturer Huss Park Attractions reports to InterPark that the company progressed through the difficult times of 2020 well and that it is "confident with regards to the coming year." It is also "looking forward to participating in real life events and trade exhibitions again."

Huss finalised a number of projects in Asia and Australia during the second half of last year. At Sea World Australia on the Gold Coast, the company finalised the installation of a new Top Spin Suspended, named Vortex, which opened in December. The attraction is part of the park's New Atlantis precinct, a major new extension of the venue that will also feature a number of other key rides and facilities.

In China, Huss has also installed two major rides at a venue, although opening and other details of this are not yet available.

Vekoma to complete numerous coaster projects in 2021

VEKOMA continues to complete numerous installations around the world on an annual basis and despite COVID-19 and the many challenges this has placed before everyone, the company is proud to have completed several projects in 2020.

Among these have been the new suspended thrill coaster Hals-über-Kopf and Family Boomerang Volldampf with intertwined lay-out at Erlebnispark Tripsdrill in Germany, the family Boomerang Spirit Saven at Fårup Sommerland in Denmark and the world's longest and first launched flying coaster F.L.Y. at Phantasialand in Germany, a ride built within a truly spectacular and detailed themed area. Indeed all these projects are custom-designed and highly themed. In addition, two family coasters have recently been completed in Armenia, along with the new Firestorm launch coaster at Vinpearl Vietnam.

Looking further ahead, for 2021 Vekoma has several other projects in the pipeline, including the opening of a custom designed family Boomerang Spirit and Super Shockwave launch coaster at Energylandia in Poland, a suspended family coaster (SFC450) at Parc du Bocasse in France and a family coaster (FC207) in Qatar.

At Energylandia the Super Shockwave coaster Abyssus will feature in the new themed area Aqualantis and has a variable layout with high pacing and unique and surprising elements in a track length of 1,316m. At Parc du Bocasse, the 453m suspended family coaster is unique in that approximately 80 per cent of the attraction is terrain following, with a two-tunnel element to enhance the feeling of speed and close encounters.

In China this year, Fantawild will open a Top Gun launch coaster at three different Fantawild parks, two family coasters (FC335), four family Boomerang Rebounds, a suspended family coaster (SFC450) and a Hyper Space Warp looping coaster.



The Vekoma suspended family coaster (SFC450) at Parc du Bocasse, France

Polin records a variety of 'firsts' during 2020

POLIN has been involved in a number of "firsts" in the past year, including the first-ever fully transparent composite Looping Rocket waterslide at Candyland theme park at the Vogue Hotel, Bodrum, Turkey.

The park also features one of the largest themed, multi-level water play structures in the world. At more than 17m high, the candy themed structure incorporates 10 waterslides and 150 interactive features, including nine waterfall jets, 19 water guns, two soft water buckets and 10 tippy buckets.

At the Kirman Arycanda de Luxe resort, also in Turkey, the first Polin Utexture waterslide was opened. This is a new generation technique of vacuum assisted, resin transfer moulding production that "pushes the limits of imagination." Using this method, operators are able to differentiate their facilities with its unique technology that provides natural colour transitions and artistic approaches.

In Vietnam, Polin was involved with the Cyclone World area at Vinpearl Vinwonders theme park. This is a Hawaiian-style area that features more than 40 record-breaking water games, including a 175m long waterslide and King Cobra waterslide – the first in Vietnam.

Over in Greece, a number of rides and water play equipment products have been installed in the country for the first time at the Aquapolis Athens waterpark, while in China, Wonder Flux, the world's first waterslide projection tunnel, is now in operation at Texas Waterworld, Wuchuan. The waterslide features a single or double person ride that has a river-like meandering path before entering a dark tunnel, offering guests wonders through advanced projection applying technology.



Simworx continues to push the boundaries of immersive technologies

DURING the past couple of years UK company Simworx has continued to innovate and further enhance its capabilities. Despite the challenges that COVID-19 has brought to the industry, the company has continued to push itself and the boundaries of immersive technologies.

Just prior to the pandemic Simworx was in the midst of promoting its world first Immersive Superflume ride, which opened towards the end of summer of 2019 at Trans Studio, Indonesia. The company partnered with water ride specialist Interlink on this one of a kind experience, to combine its Immersive Tunnel technology with a water flume ride.

Following this, at IAAPA Expo Europe 2019, Simworx launched two other brand new products – the AGV Dark Ride and Mini Flying Theatre

– while in an effort to expand its product range and offering for the FEC market and appeal to smaller venues, along with the Mini Flying Theatre, Simworx has also developed a 4DVR product that has been installed into multiple National Geographic Ultimate Explorer FECs around the world over the past couple of years.

Branded in these entertainment centres as Space Jump, the 4DVR product, which was initially developed as a passive experience, was enhanced last year to become interactive. This new feature allows guests to create their own adventure and compete against fellow participants.

Simworx's greatest successes have come from reimagining the traditional 4D Cinema in different formats and the company has pushed its 4D Cinema technology to the next level with the new Metro of Time product. The unconventional ride concept combines Simworx's 4D cinemas with a train carriage to truly immerse riders in an overarching narrative and storytelling experience while still incorporating media. Four Metro of Time carriages are due to be installed in Moscow this year.



Simworx's Metro of Time offers yet another option from the company when it comes to 4D Cinema products

Investment and innovation continues at C and S Rides

WHILE 2020 was not an easy year for the amusement sector, C and S Rides has continued to carry out new and important projects, which have worked to consolidate and strengthen its position in the market as it moves into 2021.

The most complex and challenging project has been the complete reconditioning of a flume ride, for which 3D scanning technology was also used, a further step forward in terms of innovation and attention to detail.

C and S has also expanded its product catalogue by adding a new dark ride, a junior coaster and a rodeo ride, in order to offer customers a wider range of rides in addition to its classic bumper cars. 2020 was also the year of the manufacturer's track debut of the new Viper bumper car, highly regarded for its lines and lights, with others ready to be delivered in 2021.

The company notes that the last few months have not been easy, but believes the only way to start again as soon as possible is to continue investing in new products, technology and research. This is the path C and S has chosen to follow "to be a leading player in the market."



Fabbri Group overcoming the challenges of 2020

DESPITE the challenges of 2020, Fabbri Group in Italy successfully delivered a number of projects before COVID-19 hit, including a Thumbelina themed round, rotating ride with 12 moving arms and interactive movement, installed at Vinpearl in Vietnam.

As well as this, a 50m Scary Drop Freefall tower was delivered to Zobori Elmeny Park in Hungary, while the Prater in Vienna was the recipient of a 40m, eight-passenger Booster which now features in the centre of the park. In Colombia, several 14m Big Wheels were delivered to the Confama organisation for the park Medellin, while two new 27m Wheels were delivered to Banuls Attracciones in Spain.

Looking to the year ahead, Fabbri Group has a number of deliveries planned, including a 53m wheel featuring a new cabin design offering full glazing, automatic doors, special light applications and unique features, which will be placed in Strasbourg, France, while a 63m version heads to the USA.

New ride In Control, with eight arms hydraulically driven at a height of 13m, is also in development; at each extreme of the arms, two passenger cars rotate freely. A special Scary Drop Freefall tower is also being developed for the top of a 100m high building in Cape Town, South Africa, while Fabbri Group will also work with the Farglory Group in Taiwan to build two rides for its park in Hualien.



Arihant to supply Kuwait park

ONE of the most successful leisure and entertainment groups in Kuwait has joined forces with Arihant Waterpark Equipment to build the largest waterpark in the country. The entertainment conglomerate also owns and operates premium leisure assets including Aqua Park, Dino Adventures, Cartoon Network World, Casper Scare School, Discovery and Happy Land in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Set across 16 acres with a capacity of up to 6,000 guests per day, the new waterpark will host the first Blizzard slide in the Middle East – Arihant's lead attraction that takes inspiration from the patterns and forces

of Yin and Yang to give riders "a never-before experienced ride path."

The patent-pending Blizzard creates a unique, high G-slide motion, giving the rider longer travel paths and high, unpredictable ride paths. Featuring a unique swirl and swing motion, this visually exciting ride accommodates two riders in a raft and takes guests to a top speed of 14m/sec or 50km/hour. Alongside Blizzard, there will be a large themed play structure with eight slides and interactive water features designed specifically for children and families.

Other attractions planned for the park include a thrilling six-lane Spider slide, four-seater thrill rides six-storeys high and the country's first Bowl n Bowl raft slide.

Whitewater West introduces the Duelling Master Blaster

AS InterPark went to press WhiteWater's Jungle Bay waterpark was due to complete at the Seyahi and Le Meridien Mina Seyahi resorts in Mina Seyahi, Dubai. The waterpark will include the Lighthouse Mat Racer ride, Whizzard and body slides, an impressive AquaPlay structure, gentle kids' slides and a 6m pneumatic wavepool.

WhiteWater is also working to help hotels transform into mini destination points in 2021. Partnering with Qetaifan Island North, WhiteWater is building 129,296sq.m of waterpark as part of a larger project in Lusail City, Qatar. Joined by a four-star hotel, residential complexes and retail plaza, the park will offer 21 rides, including the Icon Tower – which is set to become the highest waterslide in the world at 80m tall.

Also new for 2021 is the Duelling Master Blaster. Utilising Smart Blast technology, it uses variable frequency drives and a proprietary control algorithm to dynamically adjust pump speeds while the ride is in operation. The new system saves significant power by only ramping up motor speed when it's needed to drive riders uphill and reduces the wear and tear on the mechanical equipment.

In this evolution of the Master Blaster, inner tubes for two race alongside each other down drops and up slopes, separating at turns and features before meeting up again to see who's ahead. With windows twice the size of its predecessor, the Duelling Master Blaster creates suspense for guests waiting in line as they now have better visibility to watch riders plunge down the 10m+ mega drops.



Dotto's latest challenge - the new Big Boy 4x4 locomotive

DOTTO Trains, a world leader in the production of rail and road tourist trains, continued its research and investment into new models during 2020 despite the global pandemic.

As a result, Dotto has proudly launched the new Big Boy, a Diesel Euro VI locomotive that is capable of reaching places which previously were never thought possible!

The Big Boy is now the most powerful engine used by Dotto and is intended to be utilised on routes never before imagined for a touristic train. The new model enhances the power of the engine and the majesty of the new locomotive body. It is equipped with latest NEF FPT engine with

4500cc of displacement and 580nm of torque. The huge engine size and the traction power of 158hp/118 Kw at 2500 rpm optimise performances while minimising Co2 emissions.

Additionally, the design, dimensions and proportions of the vehicle have been completely revised to guarantee better visibility and to make the cabin more comfortable for the driver. The new, more comfortable vehicle will be able to climb slopes of more than 25 per cent at full capacity, meaning with at least 60 people on board.

But that's not all. Dotto has been busy with other new developments too with the Big Boy not the only challenge the company has given itself in the past year. With a particular focus on safety, the environment and sustainability, Dotto has also been working on a new revolutionary version of the electric train, more details of which will be available at a later date.



S&S – Sansei Technologies announces new Spin Shot Tower

S&S – Sansei Technologies has a variety of attraction openings planned for the coming year, while the company has also been working on the development of its new Spin Shot ride for much of last year.

The Spin Shot takes the thrills and excitement from the S&S 4D Free Spin coaster seat and puts them on the company's well-known tower rides. For a modest investment, the Spin Shot can be retrofitted to any S&S tower.

Custom ride profiles can be programmed to orient the rider, face-up, face-down or even upside down during the tower ride sequence and the experience is mechanically controlled to ensure maximum safety and thrills for all riders. The aim was for S&S to come up with a product it could offer current customers at an inexpensive cost and the Spin Shot provides that option.

S&S recognises the current market challenges and the limited capital expense budgets most parks now face. Executive director of sales and marketing, Josh Hays, told InterPark: "Our CEO, Tim Timco, challenged us to develop an exciting attraction that parks could offer their customers at a modest budget. We believe our talented engineering team has met that goal.

"Parks want to offer their guests new and exciting experiences every year. That is a difficult task right now, but we believe our new Spin Shot Tower will allow parks with existing tower rides to reward their guests with a thrilling experience that doesn't break the bank."

As well as the development of the Spin Shot, numerous S&S projects are due to open during the coming year. These include a Combo Tower for Hainan Ocean Paradise in China and another for Adventure Island in Doha, Qatar; 4D Free Spin coasters at Six Flags Dubai (the first 4DFS in the Middle East for S&S) and Adventureland Park in Altoona, Iowa, USA; a Space Shot Tower for Chongqing Wanda Theme Park, China; and an air launch coaster for Changsha Window of the World in China, featuring multiple inversions and the first air launch coaster by S&S in Asia to have inversions.



Signature Tower coaster the latest concept from Maurer

MAURER Rides has designed a new ride concept that is set to inspire technicians and marketing managers alike – The Spike Signature Tower.

The company has imagined a roller coaster in the future "that looks like a signature or autograph; like the company logo or the lettering of the leading brand product." This is the core of the new concept Signature Tower from the Munich-based roller coaster manufacturer. The technical basis of the Signature Tower is the patented and award-winning Spike drive, freeing the designers from limiting facts such as lifts, launches or block brakes and opening up a densely packed ride experience.

The Signature Tower spirals upward – curve, arc, loop, figure eight, one level after another, passengers jet upwards, experiencing wide-open views and uplifting forces – before plummeting back down into the tangle of calligraphy styled Signature coils.

The tower concept comes with a small footprint compared to other coasters and a concept height of 30m, although it can be scaled to any height.

Utilising the Spike system allows riders to control the speed of their own vehicle, meaning even thrilling track layouts can be ridden by most ages. Another effect of the dense tower design is that the cars meet each other on the ascent and descent, something that rarely happens on conventional coaster layouts.

According to Maurer, the new concept has so much potential that the company wants to build up its own sub-brand from it. "Signature towers make their mark: in the landscape, in the design and in recognition," states managing director Jörg Beutler. "Every company gets its very own unmistakable tower with a colour and lighting concept."



F.L.Y. brings the thrill of flight to Phantasialand's spectacular new Rookburgh themed world

By David Whitworth

Images courtesy
Phantasialand
Land and Vekoma

LAST autumn, Phantasialand, located in Brühl, Germany, gave flight to its latest roller coaster attraction – a flying coaster called F.L.Y. The park, which attracts around two million visitors annually, officially launched their new creation on September 20 last year.

Phantasialand describes the revolutionary ride as: "Sitting upright, your journey with F.L.Y. begins until (when) your pilot's seat turns gallantly under the rail for lift-off and you are shot into the sky lying down – and flying!"

Designed by Dutch manufacturer Vekoma, F.L.Y. marks a new generation of flying coaster with its technological advances pushing the boundaries of rider experience.

Stefan Holtman, sales manager at Vekoma Manufacturing, adds further insight when discussing the attraction with InterPark.

"We have been working on Phantasialand's new flying coaster together since 2014. It took until 2017 to finalise the new train design and prototype testing. In 2018, the track production was completed. The ride installation was a huge

challenge due to the heavy theming, different floor layers, site complexity and the lack of space. It has been one of the most complex building sites we have ever experienced. Finally, with close co-operation with Phantasialand we were very proud that last September the doors of this unique and amazing themed area could be shown to the world.

"The biggest challenge was the compact construction site and the ride's many underground layers," Holtman continued. "This meant we had to construct in a special sequence. The deepest underground track parts were constructed first to put new floor levels over them. Also, we had to build our way out of the pit to get the cranes and heavy equipment out of it.

"Luckily the borders between the Netherlands and Germany remained open for our workers. Therefore we could continue working on the ride while naturally taking all special restrictions needed at the working site."

And there were also challenges when it came to the coaster's design.

"The first and primary goal was to create the best possible ride experience of this new flying coaster with as much flying time as possible," Holtman explained. "The challenge in this tight space, was the position of the two launches, the station load and unload section, the brake sections and the transfer tables and storage spurs to hold three complete trains. All these sections then needed to be connected together to create an exciting and fluent ride experience with 50 crossings and 100 crossovers on a footprint as tight as 100m x 75m. This, all combined with a clearance envelope of 3.6m, created an extreme track density in the entire area. The next challenge was designing a support structure to hold all this 'spaghetti' in the air and some huge column spans through the many crossings and obstacles on location. Phantasialand and their creative team did an excellent job."

F.L.Y. utilises a unique seating system which improves the lying position for riders, an aspect of such coasters that has often been an issue.

"During discussions with Phantasialand about F.L.Y. we were never satisfied with the loading position," says Holtman. "While we were testing the flying and lying position on a mock-up in our factory, the idea was born to turn the vehicles 90 degrees. The flying coaster is notoriously a very challenging ride position. Our goal was, together with Phantasialand, to create a pure flying sensation with the best possible passenger experience. With F.L.Y. we have created a unique flying experience.



"In order to improve passenger comfort, we made modifications to the train. We tilted the passenger seats 15 degrees away from parallel for a better forward view. The rider is positioned into a more lay down angle where the angle between the legs and upper body is much more than 90 degrees. This spreads the weight over the whole body. The leg restraint is completely modified for better support. The pitch between the passengers is increased 30cm, creating a very open and individual feeling.



Project profile



"Regarding the track design and fabrication, we use state of the art 3D CNC bending machines which are especially developed for Vekoma," Holtman continued. "With this, together with a G-Force based design tool and special procedures on track assembly, we can create a constant and very smooth ride experience."

"F.L.Y.'s track layout was designed with an uncompromised focus on the sensation of flight. This means all aerobatics are performed in the flying position, but with a high degree of variation in forces and countless direction changes. Sections where riders are pushed in the vest are always followed by an airtime hill or a roll-over element where riders experience zero-G flight. This keeps the ride

experience unpredictable and thrilling, but accessible to all visitors. The pace strikes a balance between the sensation of speed and allowing riders to take in the attraction's incredible views. F.L.Y. was designed as part of an integral flying experience that factors in all the spectacular close encounters with the area's scenery – a journey rather than a ride."

F.L.Y. makes use of four trains with 10 cars per train. Riders are seated two across in single rows for a maximum of 20 riders in each. During busy periods, F.L.Y. can transport 1,400 riders per hour. It is not only the latest in this genre of coaster, but is also the world's first flying launch coaster. Additionally, F.L.Y. covets the record for the longest flying coaster with a track length of 4295ft (1.3km).

The aesthetics of F.L.Y. are particularly eye-catching. A burgundy track texture makes the ride stand out and complements the area's steampunk theming. The track and its riders glide over an impressive water feature while another novel feature is the effective white mist hanging over the ride to create a hazy atmosphere. F.L.Y. also has the added element of being lit up at night with an illuminous blue neon light beaming through the track structure. In the dark the ride whooshes through the lights giving an added thrill for coaster enthusiasts.

The attraction carves its way through the huge scale themed area of Rookburgh, which was four years in the making and is one of seven 'lands' located in Phantasialand. The ride was built where the attraction Race for Atlantis previously lay and riders get a close shave passing through tightly compact buildings, bridges and gates. The track also snakes through the towering Pier 5 stanchion, which further reflects the industrial theming and also acts as a soundboard to keep noise to a minimum for nearby residents.

Off ride, one of the gems of Rookburgh is the Hotel Charles Lindbergh, where guests can stay in an originally themed cabin and "sleep like an aeronaut." They also enjoy the privilege of seeing the ride close up, with spectacular views from their accommodation terrace and viewing walkways at the heart of F.L.Y. The hotel is actually located within the ride and guests gain access to the attraction through an exclusive entrance, forming part of the Explorers Society.

Rookburgh is also home to a sandwich shop and a chocolate and candy shop called Emilies, selling bespoke F.L.Y. chocolate bars. There is also a bar and the Uhrwerk restaurant – so plenty of culinary choice with a harmonised theme present.



Rookburgh welcomes visitors through a dimly lit, old-fashioned tunnel. Various portraits adorn the arched brick walls with a full scale 1900s classic sports car as its centerpiece. On exiting the tunnel, guests are met with the sight of F.L.Y. in all its glory, with the track appearing from all angles. Phantasialand has placed great emphasis on theming, from a huge train perched above the first launch area and various airships to its black and gold truck, ideal for a photo opportunity. The water surrounding the ride produces great visuals too, while in addition Rookburgh offers a variety of music and smells to heighten your senses and strike the right tone.

The attention to detail also extends to F.L.Y.'s queue line, commencing with an elevated staircase – a great vantage point overlooking Rookburgh. Glowing red lanterns, excavation zones, cranes, ropes, sandbags and portholes continue the theme of construction and machinery, perfectly enhancing F.L.Y.'s backstory. With so many features to marvel, it is a case of blink and you will miss it.

A pre-ride show greets guests before they set flight and once on board, the ride is an instant thrill, starting with a linear synchronous motor system hurling riders, literally, off to a flying start. The track then veers through those close proximity buildings before a second LSM launch propels riders onto the next part of the circuit as the ride traverses through various undulations and dips in and out of tunnels.

F.L.Y. successfully produces those near miss elements giving a mixture of emotions. It includes two corkscrew inversions but produces a comfortable experience for its



riders, while some parts of the track are hidden through underground tunnels and between buildings, which enhances the ride experience.

Discussing their latest landmark attraction further with InterPark, Phantasialand's creative team outlined some specific elements of the project. For example, the name F.L.Y. was chosen as they "wanted the name of the attraction to make sure instantly that the dream of flying actually comes true here," while on the choice of Vekoma as the ride supplier, the team commented: "The decision to co-operate with Vekoma was primarily based on their willingness to fully engage with us according to our specifications and requirements. We didn't want to create an 'off-the-shelf' coaster, but a completely new roller coaster experience. In the case of F.L.Y.: a flying experience requiring a new seating system, new technology and a special track layout – our declared goal for this unique coaster development. Both Vekoma and Phantasialand

shared this vision and together we worked in close cooperation to achieve this."

Such a large and heavily themed project inevitably threw up a variety of challenges, as the Phantasialand team revealed.

"The vision of our owner and managing director Robert Löffelhardt was to create a themed world that is truly self-contained and immersive by day and night, where everything merges together, from the theming to the food and the experience at night. Gradually, this led to the planning of Rookburgh and F.L.Y. in harmony with the Hotel Charles Lindbergh. The plans were used to create the first models and drawings, which were then brought to life here on site by our project department.

"The construction was problematic due to the special spatial conditions. Phantasialand has very limited space therefore when building new themed worlds, we are used to constructing different attractions into one another, such as Raik and Taron, which cross each other several times. In Rookburgh we created a hotel, a restaurant, a candy workshop and indeed F.L.Y. in the smallest of spaces.

"Our special hotel architecture with its five buildings (the "gates"), six levels and special cabin design of its rooms and the enormously tangled track of the roller coaster right through the middle of Rookburgh and the hotel was a challenging proposal."

And the team concluded: "The themed world Rookburgh is part of the themed area Berlin – a world of the Golden 20s. Our closing show is The Magic Rose – Spirit of Light during our winter season Wintertraum. We chose this theme and developed it into our own version of steampunk in Rookburgh. We wanted to bring both the steampunk theme and the Berlin area together (in a setting) in which industrial tones and the theme of aviation were central, while innovative yet charmingly old-fashioned characteristics of steampunk shaped the design and spirit. Amazing innovations combined with down-to-earth craftsmanship."



MK Themed Attractions partners with Phantasialand

A crucial element of the ground-breaking F.L.Y. development is its impressive theming which truly enhances the guests' experience. Tasked with working with Phantasialand on this project were the Danish theming experts MK Themed Attractions.

"We are extremely proud and happy to have been a part of the Rookburgh project and to have helped Phantasialand make their dream theme a reality," the company's Lars Nielsen told *InterPark*. "We were involved in producing some central highlights for the new themed area. These included the 1:1 replica of a real looking old locomotive and the train wagon which tows behind it. It was placed on railroads high above the ground on top of the ride's entrance and functions as an eye-catching element in the themed world of Rookburgh.

"We furthermore produced several boilers as well as custom-made lamps and other heavily themed elements for the ride's queue area to capture the industrial feel the park required. With all these elements combined, it is appropriately fitting for this one of a kind steam punk look at Rookburgh.

"We really love the attention to detail that has been put into the theming for Phantasialand's brand new area. We are really proud of our heavily themed steam punk items in this new world. It has been an amazing project for us to be part of and we wish to thank Phantasialand for the collaboration."

Based in Ringsted, Denmark, MK Themed Attractions produces theming elements for large scale projects, such as the lifelike train which decorates F.L.Y. and gives a significant focal point to Rookburgh. In addition, the company produces tailor-made theming for a host of diverse attractions and specially themed items to enable guests to sample a fully immersive experience.

F.L.Y., a unique flying coaster creation, certainly lives up to Phantasialand's tagline of 'Hier ist dein Spaß' (Here is your fun). It rides as smooth as silk and is a flying coaster fitting of the modern day era. Its spectacular theming and immersive storytelling truly enhance the ride experience.



Gardaland serves EV motorists with new charging points

By Michael Mascioni

AS electric vehicles (EV) make a greater push into the leisure market and as sustainability initiatives expand in that market, amusement and theme parks are increasing their efforts to accommodate EVs by installing charging points.

Gardaland in Italy has taken a major step in serving guests with EVs through its installation of four charging point stations in its parking area close to the main entrance of the venue, reports CEO Aldo Maria Vigevani. The 22 kW pole stations, which were installed by Enel X, incorporate a Mennekes socket, allowing for the simultaneous charging of eight electric vehicles. They were installed last October in conjunction with the opening of Gardaland Magic Halloween.

As Vigevani explains, Gardaland together with Enel X “decided to install the charging points to satisfy the requests from our visitors for environmentally sustainable mobility. The installation also represents a significant development for the entire surrounding area, not only for Italian motorists – who increasingly choose electric cars – but also for foreign tourists, who visit Lake Garda in large numbers and are particularly interested in electric mobility.”

Currently, the park doesn’t have figures on EV motorists visiting the facility, but “it will monitor the use of our charging points in the next months and the results of eco-incentives for electric cars. Next year, we will have more

reliable data on guests who use sustainable mobility,” notes Vigevani.

According to Vigevani, additional charging points will be installed “based on guest requests for them and on the evolution of the electric mobility market. In any case, we are willing to add them when needed,” he says.

Gardaland sees major growth in the use of EVs by park guests over the next few years. Vigevani predicts that “EV use in parks will become quickly common in the next few years, considering also the push of car manufacturers to produce electric cars and the eco-incentives they offer buyers.”





Lionsgate emphasises diversification with its immersive attractions at Lionsgate Entertainment World

By Michael Mascioni

AS amusement park operators and designers continue to launch immersive attractions using technologies like VR and AR, it has become increasingly challenging to offer novel and distinctive immersive concepts in parks.

Lionsgate Entertainment, a multi-faceted entertainment company, has strived to deliver a highly diverse slate of immersive attractions at Lionsgate Entertainment World in Hengqin Island, China, aimed at a broad audience that are emblematic of its holistic approach to entertainment. The attractions are based around its *Hunger Games* and *Twilight* film franchises and other popular Lionsgate film properties.



VR attractions were integral to Lionsgate Entertainment World due to the vertical nature of the indoor park limiting space, explains Jenefer Brown, executive vice-president, Global Live, Interactive and Location-Based Entertainment at Lionsgate Entertainment. As a result, they wanted to be efficient in the development of attractions and the VR attractions fit in perfectly with that configuration, as they afford more expansive experiences in a small footprint. This was particularly evident in the Dauntless Fear Simulator, a VR walk-through simulator (based on Lionsgate's *Divergent* film series) that challenges guests to overcome their fears. In addition, Lionsgate developed a VR coaster called Gods of Egypt – Battle for Eternity that was designed to be VR-based from its inception as opposed to an adaptation of an existing coaster, Brown explains. The coaster experience uses both VR and media in a very different way, expanding the ride's world and offering a "very efficient level of immersion."

In the design of its attractions, Lionsgate has taken into account "considerable guest interest in physical challenges and experiences," notes Brown. The company has also emphasised social interaction in its immersive experiences, as it believes guests are "inherently social and desire

interaction.” As a result, the company integrates social interaction in “all of our attractions.”

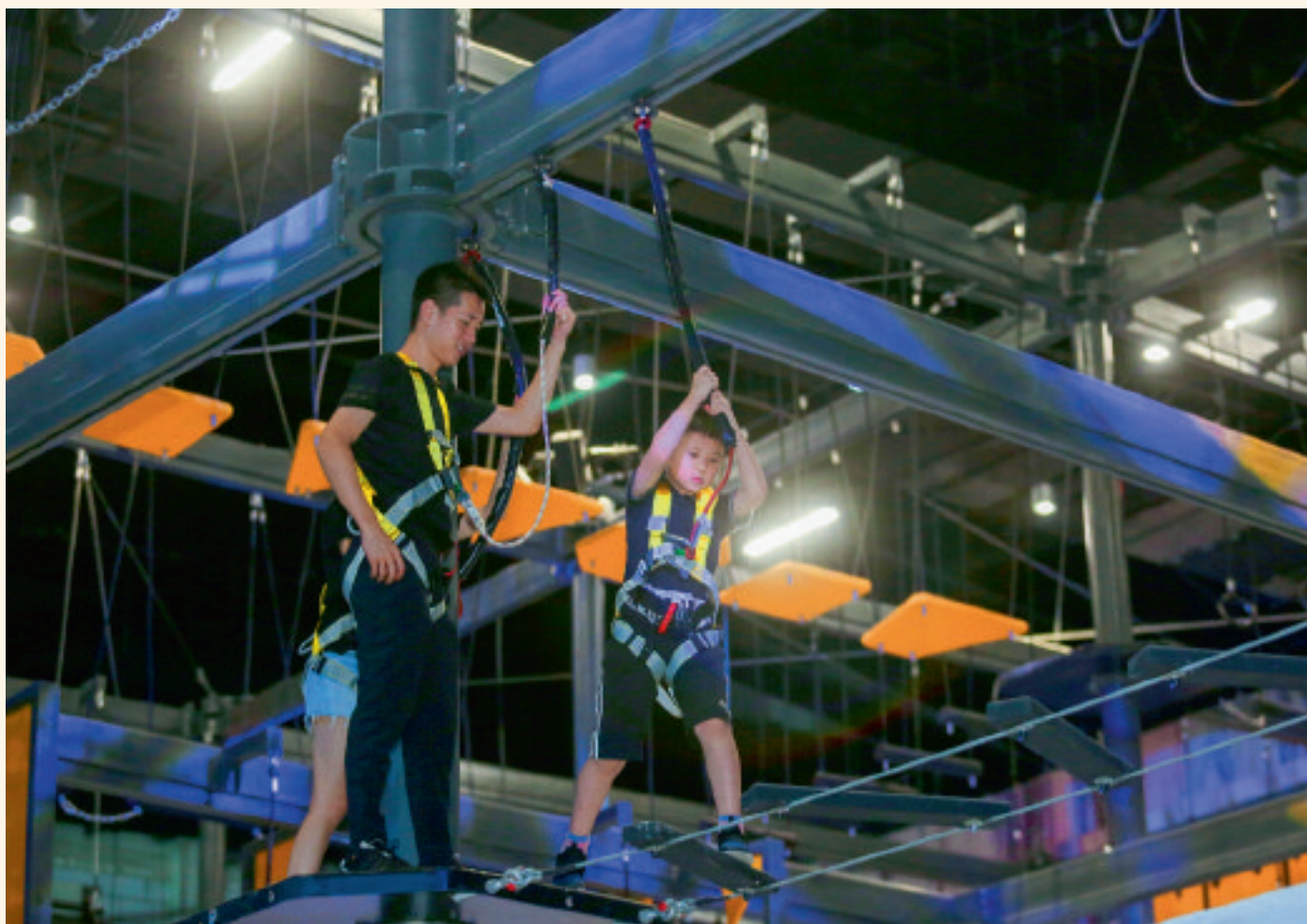
One of the most popular attractions at the park is the Twilight Saga – Midnight Ride, a VR motorbike ride. Brown describes the experience as “very unique, not just because it immerses the rider in a forest world with vampires,” but also because of its ability to “give you a real sensation of being on a motorcycle” due to its motion platform and wind and heat effects. It allows the rider to view the road ahead on their VR headset while experiencing these effects. According to Brown, the ride is “fast moving and our guests are deeply immersed in the world as they physically move ahead.” Guests can ride on multiple terrains and can bring up to three additional friends and family members along, allowing for shared connectivity. The ride is particularly popular with teens and young adults, she reports.

Lionsgate studies and takes into account key consumer entertainment trends when designing its theme park attractions. For example, it factored “the growth and popularity of e-sports” in the planning of such attractions as The Twilight Saga – Midnight Ride. Due to the strong impact of video games on other facets of entertainment, the

company incorporated elements of “gamification in different aspects of our attractions, including pre-experiences, during the experience and in mobile experiences following the attraction.” As Brown points out, there is great crossover between its three principal businesses – games, films and theme park attractions, since the lines between those businesses increasingly blur and there is considerable crossover between audiences in those sectors. Consequently, Lionsgate takes a “fluid” approach with these businesses.

Understandably, the pandemic has had a significant impact on usage of the VR attractions at the park – according to Brown, the VR attractions are “always crowded and long waits are common.”

It’s striking that Lionsgate provides a wide range of immersive attractions at Lionsgate Entertainment World. In fact, Lionsgate’s mission with its immersive attractions is to maintain “diversification” and deliver a whole array of attractions “in one place,” says Brown. Ordinarily, guests might have to buy separate tickets for these attractions, but Lionsgate’s strategy is to provide a complete package of these experiences so that “guests can spend an entire day engaging with all of these attractions in our park.”





Another key element in the park is the Escape Plan – Prison Break, an escape game Brown calls highly “unique” as it offers a multi-room experience that allows guests to work first in different groups, then independently and finally in groups again to solve the challenge. She describes the attraction as a “highly immersive experience that is very story driven with diverse tasks that combines real and fictional elements.” She feels the reality element sets it apart, as it provides a strong tactile and physical experience, allowing guests to crawl through a panel and master a machine, for example. The escape game doesn’t use such immersive technologies as VR and AR.

Lionsgate’s attraction The Twilight Saga – Bella’s Journey also takes rides in a new direction. Brown explains that the dark ride experience “follows the romantic journey of Edward and Bella, using animatronics, special effects and giant immersive screens to create cinematic moments.”

Lionsgate also offers at its park an e-tourism VR attraction called Chasm Challenger’s Course, with climbing challenges. According to Brown, response to that attraction has exceeded her expectations. She attributes its popularity to the attraction’s ability to “immerse guests in a very physical experience using IP and theming,” unlike “most challenges, which lack theming.” Guests relish the idea of becoming brave athletes and action figures.

As already noted, VR attractions were integral to Lionsgate Entertainment World due to the vertical nature of the indoor park, limiting space. As a result, they were forced to be efficient in the development of attractions and the VR attractions fit in perfectly with that layout, as they afford more expansive experiences in a small footprint. Among these, Lionsgate developed a VR coaster that was designed to be VR-based from its inception as opposed to an adaptation of an existing coaster, Brown explains. The coaster experience is “very authentic” and uses both VR and media in a very different way, expanding the ride’s world and offering a “very efficient level of immersion.”

In terms of safety, Lionsgate applied lessons learned from safety procedures employed by other parks earlier in the pandemic in order to craft their own safety procedures. Those include mandatory mask wearing, temperature checks and sanitising VR headsets after each guest experience (with only one person using a headset at a time). Brown notes, however, that strict safety procedures were employed with the VR attractions even before the pandemic. For example, protective covers were fitted into VR headsets prior to each use and then discarded after use. Brown is “happy to report all of our guests have abided by the safety procedures we’ve employed,” and procedures haven’t had an adverse impact on the guest experience.

Overall, Lionsgate's mission with its attractions has been to create "the most authentic experiences possible and best in class experiences that aren't confined by traditional experience models," which "has liberated us to be as creative as possible," Brown says.

The company sees an "upward trend" in highly immersive attractions, as guests "take stories and make them their own and interact with and step inside characters." Essentially, the company harnesses "immersive technologies and scenic environments in its attractions to help create stories that allow guests to live out their dreams and escape reality."

In terms of its location-based entertainment plans moving forward, the company's "current focus is on inventively expanding our themed midway game, additional creative F&B and dynamic retail offerings," says Brown. Overall, she sees myriad new opportunities for VR and mixed reality attractions in parks-

"As in-home VR becomes more affordable and VR experiences become more commonplace, theme park VR/mixed reality attractions will need to feel elevated, special and authentic and, at the same time, be capable of meaningful throughput," she states. "I see the greatest potential in creating innovative combinations of purpose-built VR or AR, entertainment experiences and ride systems that are unique to theme parks (i.e. a gamified VR or AR wal-through or maze that culminates with a dark or drop ride). Multi-player experiences through these different mediums that give guests



agency to make decisions, impact their outcomes and work together have great potential for success."

Brown adds that "we are exploring the concept of Lionsgate Entertainment World in other strategic locations around the world."

On another front, Lionsgate plans to open a 4D roller coaster attraction called John Wick: Open Contract at Motiongate Dubai in early 2021. According to Brown, the attraction "will give fans an authentically immersive opportunity to step inside The Continental. By taking different queue paths, guests will be able to explore the inner workings and environments (from the lobby to the armoury to the switchboard) of the hotel's sacred grounds from two unique perspectives – as an assassin hunting or helping John Wick. The guest journey culminates in an intensive coaster experience intended to deliver on the exceptional balletic action sequences John Wick is known for."

All images
courtesy Lionsgate
Entertainment



Old fashioned customer service for today



Image courtesy Cedar Point

By Chris Smoje

WE live in a world where everything seems to be modernised. Technology, innovation, growth, change, evolution and progress seem to be the buzz words in business right now.

Let me be completely up-front and say that all of the words I just mentioned can do wonders for the customer experience and I am very supportive of businesses who take the lead and make improvements which in turn contribute to a better experience for customers.

But on the other-hand, when it comes to service, I think there is an element of nostalgia that many people still have dear to their hearts. No-one likes to consider themselves as backward, or living in the past (and that certainly conflicts with my earlier comment about the way forward for business), but if you asked someone the question “What do you fondly remember about old-fashioned customer service?” their face would normally light up.

I’ve heard countless stories I could almost write a book on! Things like having milk bottles delivered to your doorstep, having someone press a button in the elevator for you and having someone fill up your car with fuel or gas while you wait – these have been some of the top ones that keep coming up. What’s interesting here is that the way service was in the past is reflected upon in awe. Things aren’t done that way anymore and we need to ask the question why?

Now the first thing to clarify is that overall, the concept of service in the “old days” hasn’t changed one bit to now (even though many believe it has). The essence of service has remained the same for hundreds of years. Here are a few examples of some of the things from before our time that are still relevant today:

- In 1868 the world’s first moneyback guarantee was introduced by Joseph Ray Watkins for his medical products in an attempt to win the confidence of customers.
- In 1876 the world’s first electric telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell, which signified the start of customers being able to contact suppliers directly.
- In 1887 Coca-Cola was the first brand to use a discount coupon, signifying the commencement of relationship marketing.

It is so timely to write this in my first InterPark article for 2021, which is 153 years on from that first moneyback guarantee. When you think about the essence of service since then, it still remains the same – and for those who read my previous articles last year, the COVID-19 global pandemic has only proven that being of service to customers is more relevant today than ever before.

OK, so the essence of service hasn’t really changed in over 150 years, so what has? I always see customer service as a massive grey area. It’s not black or white, it’s often in the middle. When organisations make commercial or innovative decisions, they have a very binary approach. For example, “It’s this OR this.” Rather it should be, “It can be this AND this.” So here is an example we can work with:

Technology often involves automation of some kind. Things like self-service, giving the customer greater control – seamless touchpoints, etc. What is often forgotten is this doesn’t take the entire place of human centred service. In fact, what isn’t usually considered is that technology isn’t 100 per cent fool-proof. Customers that don’t opt for “self-

service” are considered to be “backward” when they merely haven’t been given the time and safety environment to be “shown” what they need to do. When technology is seen as a way to save money in the long-run, service standards begin to drop.

The successful organisations recognise that a hybrid approach of technology and humans together provides customers with the personal touch and reassurance while using the technology. This can be as simple as someone greeting a customer when they tap their season pass card on one of the electronic gates. Yes, customers rarely would need help tapping their cards, but they may also need some directions or have a question about something else that they need answered.

So the question that you should consider is “Are there some automated touchpoints that are missing human interaction in our attraction?” Have a good look at your customers, their feedback and always see humans and technology as being able to work together.

The final point I would like to make is just how much of the customer “experience” is made up of service (and that’s without going into the service versus experience debate). I’ll articulate it through a brief story.

I was talking to an owner of a café-restaurant a few years ago about how we could work together with his team. I kept using the word “service” and he frankly told me “We don’t need any help on our service. Our service is fine. I want to look at making greater improvements to the customer experience.” And so I asked what he wanted to achieve. He responded by saying he wanted his café to be known for having a quick and efficient customer experience

given that so many neighbouring restaurants were slow. So, I told him, in order to create a quick and efficient customer experience the following has to occur:

- Customers must be greeted promptly (service).
- Customers must be given the menu and a glass of water as they are seated (service).
- Customers must be checked-up on within a few minutes of reading the menu to be given any specials, asked for any questions and for orders to be taken (service).
- When the customers are eating, they must be checked-in on early as they eat their food (service).
- When their meals are complete their plates must be taken away and they must be offered the desert menu (service).

You can see where this is going. Almost all the customer experience in this case is contributed to by how the waitstaff are being of service. This is such an important story to remember when you hear someone say that service is old-fashioned and the customer experience is far more important – look at all of the things you are trying to achieve at your attraction and evaluate whether service can make the difference.



Image courtesy
Bakken

Chris Smoje is a Customer Service Expert, an alumni of the Disney Institute with theme park service leadership experience. Chris helps leaders and human resource teams create cultures that serve.

www.chrissmoje.com



Image courtesy Busch
Gardens Tampa Bay

Matt Eckert



Matt Eckert, president, Holiday World & Splashin' Safari, US

InterPark: Can you provide a brief outline of your time in the attractions industry and the positions you've held?

Matt Eckert: I joined Holiday World & Splashin' Safari on Valentine's Day, 2000. So, I have been in the industry now for almost 21 years. During my time here, I have been the director of accounting and finance, general manager of shared services and president since 2013.

IP: What is the history of Holiday World & Splashin' Safari? When was it founded and by whom?

ME: Holiday World & Splashin' Safari was first

opened as Santa Claus Land on August 3, 1946, by Louis J. Koch. As we are approaching our 75th year of operation, we have seen enormous growth. We became Holiday World in 1984 when we started introducing additional holiday themed sections to the park. In 1993, we added Splashin' Safari.

IP: What do you feel are some of the key strengths and USPs that your parks have to offer?

ME: We are first and foremost a park for families. We really pride ourselves on the value that we offer. You pay one price for two parks; free soft drinks all day; free sunscreen; free parking. We offer world class roller coasters, world class water attractions and have other attractions throughout both parks for the entire family.

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IP: Can you briefly describe the latest developments at the parks and what was new for 2020?

ME: The past couple of years have been very busy for us on the development side. In 2018, we added a new play area and kiddie wavepool in Splashin' Safari, Tembo Tides and Tembo Falls. In 2019, we completely remodelled what was once our flagship restaurant, Kringles' Kafe, into Santa's Merry Marketplace, offering a wide variety of foods and treats. In 2020, we introduced Cheetah Chase, the world's first launched racing water coaster.

IP: How do you incentivise your staff to do the best job they can?

ME: We are blessed that we live in the heartland of hospitality. Our team members have customer service ingrained in their every-day actions. We do, however, have parties for them throughout the season and they earn HoliPoints that they can redeem for a variety of perks and prizes.

IP: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, what would you say were some of the main trends in the US parks and attractions industry and in the wider global industry too?

ME: Prior to COVID-19, our industry was in growth mode. Across the globe, new attractions were being introduced, new food concepts being highlighted, innovative technology implemented. COVID-19 brought many of these things to an unfortunate halt.

IP: How did you continue to engage with guests during the period of enforced closure prior to opening for the 2020 season?

ME: Our communications team did a fantastic job keeping our guests engaged. One thing we did was have a "Virtual Opening Day" with a jam packed schedule for our guests to enjoy from the comfort of their home while still feeling like they were here with us.

IP: Obviously operating your parks in 2020 was very

different to previous years. What operational changes did you introduce to enable you to open and operate safely for both employees and guests?

ME: We went above and beyond from a safety standpoint, for both our guests and our team members. Face coverings were required by all. Ground markings were everywhere to help maintain social distancing. We introduced hand "Santa" tizer and had those strategically stationed throughout the parks. Several attractions were closed where social distancing could not be maintained. The biggest introduction this season was the use of virtual queueing on our larger attractions. This allowed our guests to enter the queues virtually, without having to wait in a congested line, and be able to go experience other attractions/restaurants/shops while they "waited."

IP: What are you envisaging the pandemic will do to visitor numbers in 2020 at Holiday World & Splashin' Safari? And are guests showing a willingness to visit or has confidence to visit parks and other venues been hit?

ME: Consumer confidence has certainly taken a hit. While I do not have a crystal ball (I wish I did!), I do see that confidence returning. Our industry has proven to be very resilient and we will all continue to monitor what is going on in the world and adapt accordingly. We will eventually be beyond normal and be providing the best, fun and most safe experiences to our guests.

IP: How do you think consumer behaviour in the future will change at parks in view of the pandemic?

ME: I believe there is pent up demand. Once we have worked through the pandemic and confidence is restored, I fully anticipate for all parks around the globe to see a lot of attention. We are ready!

IP: Holiday World & Splashin' Safari regularly invests in new rides and attractions. What are some of your plans for the future and will the situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic impact on these in any way?

ME: I obviously cannot give away our secret, but we have many projects on the drawing board for our future development. We will see how the next few years play out and Holiday World & Splashin' Safari will continue to grow.



Personally speaking

Not a lot of people know this but I am very good at ... singing

The most interesting place I've ever been to is ... the 9/11 Memorial and Museum

Family aside, the prized possession I value above all others is ... I am struggling to answer this one. I do not consider myself to be a "material" person, so I am going to say family anyways. They are my world.

My favourite film is ... any of the Harry Potter films

When I'm not working I like to ... spend time with my kids, go to their sporting events

The person who has influenced me most is ... professionally, Will Koch. Personally, hands down my dad.

My favourite musician/band is ... Toss-up between Gavin DeGraw and Matt Nathanson

If I could invite a celebrity to dinner it would be ... don't judge... but Betty White. That lady is an icon!

My unfulfilled ambition is ... to visit Australia

To really chill out I... spend time with good friends and family

I really dislike ... dishonesty

Futuroscope, France



THE educational leisure park Futuroscope, situated near Poitiers in eastern France, opened in 1987, the first stone of the project having been laid in 1984 by René Monory, president of the General Council of Vienne and father of the project.

From the outset, the attractions focused on technology, science and discovery. The project, which was partly based on the Epcot theme park in Florida and the Tsukuba Expo in Japan, was an enormous gamble for a rural region. Futuroscope was the first major amusement park to open in France, before Parc Asterix (1989) and Disneyland Paris (1992).

Among the first attractions available was the Kinémax, the largest flat screen in Europe (600sq.m), the Futuroscope Pavilion (events and temporary exhibitions) and a fun area. Not far away, the training area and the technological activities area formed the Futuroscope site. The following year saw the open of the first Dynamic Cinema, Children's World and the Showscan attraction, while subsequent years saw the introduction of attractions such as the Relief Cinema, the 360° Cinema, the Omnimax (an Imax system with a semi-spherical screen) and the Gyrotour, an overview of the park at 45m high.

In 1990 Futuroscope produced its first 360 degree film on the Tour de France cycle race, which begins at the site, while two years later the Magic Carpet (a screen in front, a screen under a glass floor) and the Landscapes of Europe (a boat trip) were inaugurated. 1994 saw the debuts of the Pavillon de la Vienne (dynamic cinema) and a second Dynamic Cinema. Dynamic Vienne provided visitors with a madcap film about a man who sleeps in on the morning of his wedding and has to rush and scramble across the Vienne department to meet his bride-to-be. The attraction was updated in 2007 and is still one of the park's flagship shows.

Futuroscope hosted its 10 millionth guest in 1995, when the park also opened the new Palais des Congrès, offering a larger reception capacity, while the year after the first Imax 3D attraction by Jean-Jacques Annaud was introduced, this showing the first fiction film to be made using this then revolutionary technology, Wings of Courage. The film tells the legendary, epic tale of pilot Henri Guillaumet, who crashed in the Andes mountain range in 1930. In the same year visitor numbers to the park were at their peak with over 2.7m guests through the gates.

1999 saw the park reach its 20 millionth visitor, while in 2002 the then owners of Futuroscope, the Amaury

Group, which had owned the venue since the spring of 2000, sold up. Despite the new Futuroscope high-speed train station, which opened in 2000, bringing visitors direct to the park, admissions were down significantly and the accounts at the time were in the red. The park was taken over by a semi-public company, the main shareholders of which were the Vienne General Council and the Poitou-Charentes Regional Council. Dominique Hummel was named chairman of the Board.

2003 saw the opening of La Cité du Numérique (60 consoles with two players and 80 workstations for "gamers"), in the Pavillon du Futuroscope, while the park past the 30m visitor mark in 2005. Two years later it celebrated its 20th anniversary and attendance numbers continued to rise steadily, from 1.6m to 1.8m between 2007 and 2010. Futuroscope was also now making a profit again.

To help celebrate the anniversary, exhibitions, concerts, shows and cultural and sporting events were held throughout the year and the park concluded its 20th season with a turnover of around €0m. The new strategy had helped the park become a full-fledged holiday destination. Through its creative spirit, its ability to innovate and its search for a balance between pleasure



PARKLIFE



and discovery, Futuroscope was establishing itself as an original leisure offer.

2008 witnessed the inauguration of a new building and an attraction that brought the technique of augmented reality into the leisure sector – Les Animaux du Futur – while in 2009 a new Night Show, The Mystery of the Blue Note, was introduced on the lake in the park. In December of the same year, the inauguration of another new attraction, Arthur, l'Aventure 4D, took place.

Another significant event during 2009 was the departure from Futuroscope of its illustrious founder, René Monory, a little over 20 years after its creation. Project man and visionary decision-maker, he had the brilliant idea of “growing the future in a field” as he liked to say, and succeeded in doing so.



In 2011 another change of ownership came about with Compagnie des Alpes, owner of Parc Asterix and the Musée Grevin among other leisure interests, becoming the majority shareholder in Futuroscope with 45 per cent of the shares, ahead of the Vienne General Council (38 per cent) and the Caisse des Depots (17 per cent). In 2012 the park celebrated its 25th anniversary with a new 4D attraction, The Little Prince, and two years later The Raving Rabbids “invaded” Futuroscope with the attraction The Time Machine. Designed in association with Ubisoft, this is a fun and immersive 3D journey from prehistoric times through ancient Rome and on to the Wild West and beyond and is a real must-see for young visitors.

Futuroscope’s 50 millionth visitor was recorded in 2016, when the park also added a new night show, imagined by Cirque du Soleil and called La Forge aux étoiles. A new projection system, the IMAX Laser 4K, was installed at Kinémax for the projection of The Law of the Strongest. The following year the park made its largest investment to date with the introduction of The Extraordinary Journey, inspired by Jules Verne’s Around the World in 80 Days. This immersive, Flying Theatre attraction was an instant hit with visitors, taking them on a flight with their legs dangling free below. It took four years and €12.5m to build.

The park saw a change at its helm in 2018, with Rodolphe Bouin succeeding Dominique Hummel as chairman. Boudin has spent his entire career at Futuroscope, which he joined in 2000 as a management auditor before taking on a number of management positions. He has been the chairman of the board of directors since April 2018 and together with the teams at Futuroscope and the support of La Compagnie des Alpes, he is working on a “10 year vision.”

Previously particular well-known for its media based attractions, this year Futuroscope took the decision to add its first roller coaster in the shape of Objectif Mars (Destination Mars), from Intamin. At €20m it represents the park’s biggest ever investment and sends visitors hurtling through a space training centre where they can experience what it’s like to be an astronaut and put their mission capability to the test. Built on the site previously utilised by the Pavillon de Solido, riders are seated in one of four, three car trains which run on a 1,640ft track featuring both indoor and outdoor sections. The coaster also incorporates a dark/show section, vertical drop, propelled launch and propelled boost.

Additional attractions supplied over the years by Intamin have included the Gyrotour, Vienne and Dynamic, while other key suppliers have included Zierer (Sauvetage

Academy), Kuka (Danse avec les Robots), SunKid (Activités de Futuropolis) and Kompan (Aire de jeux). Dynamic Attractions is another supplier to the park, having provided the Extraordinaire Voyage, with the company also set to supply a new attraction in 2022, while Simworx has provided motion platforms for various attractions.

The park employs 400 permanent staff and an additional 750 on a seasonal basis, this figure rising to approximately 1,000 during peak season in the summer. The vast majority of visitors are French nationals, one third of these living within a three hour drive from the park. 10 per cent of Futuroscope's attendance is international, including guests from Spain, Belgium and the UK. A total of 50 per cent of visitors book a two-day break when they visit. The park is open for most of the year, closing completely for just five weeks in January and the first week of February, and operating on weekends and bank holidays in the autumn but every day during all holidays.

As noted, since its creation, Futuroscope has welcomed more than 50m visitors and has over 40 attractions for guests to enjoy. The renewal of Futuroscope is part of a development strategy based on the 10/20/60 model. Each year, 10 per cent of turnover is invested to renew 20 per cent of the offer in order to bring back 60 per cent of visitors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has, of course, had a significant impact on visitor numbers for 2020, attendance figures being just over 1m last year compared to 1.9m in 2019. However, this hasn't delayed the park's ambitious future plans for its transformation, as marketing and communication director Laure Mosseron explained to InterPark.

"On October 12, 2020, Compagnie des Alpes signed a new shareholder's agreement with Banque des Territoires – Caisse des Dépôts, the Département de la Vienne and SEM Patrimoniale de la Vienne that commits the partners to a major investment plan totalling €300m (of which €200m will be carried by Compagnie des Alpes) over the next 10 years.

"As the group announced in July, this ambitious plan for the transformation of Futuroscope concerns the current facility plus a new activity zone adjacent to it, which will be managed by Compagnie des Alpes via a new 30year lease."

The new developments will incorporate a variety of attractions and facilities, including two hotels, a restaurant and an aquatic park, along with a new area in front of the park entrance. The next six years will also see three major new attractions being added, with the overall objective of the project being "to strengthen the appeal of the Futuroscope site as an exceptional short stay destination in France and Europe."



At a glance

Opened in 1987

Compagnie des Alpes majority shareholder

Attractions focus on technology, science and discovery

Over 50m visitors since opening

1.9m visitors in 2019 (just over 1m in 2020 due to COVID-19)

More than 40 attractions

€300m investment plan confirmed for next 10 years

www.futuroscope.com

‘Don’t tread on me’

By Dennis Speigel



Images courtesy
Wikimedia Commons

Continuing his series of articles on the attractions industry, International Theme Park Services (ITPS) founder and CEO Dennis Speigel changes tack slightly in this issue of InterPark to reflect on the sad scenes that took place recently in the US capital of Washington DC

WHEN writing stories for this column, I typically focus on issues affecting our industry. Last night, as I went to sleep, and this morning as I awakened (January 7), I was full of sadness and despair as I watched our nation’s symbol of democracy being desecrated by thugs, rogues and crazies.

The Capitol building of the United States of America was under siege and under attack. Windows being broken, doors being crushed, walls being scaled, art defiled and guards being attacked as they attempted to thwart the insurrection unbelievably going on in our hallowed edifice. This is the building where presidents and heroes of our country have lain in state for over 169 years. The building where the fathers of our country and the first president of the USA laid the cornerstone of the original US Capitol building

228 years ago! What the hell happened? How did we get here? Furthermore, where do we go from here?

This is a building where Republicans and Democrats lifted their voices together singing “God Bless America” after 9/11. But, yesterday, America experienced a sad and heartbreaking smack in the face during a simple election procedure that has gone on from the outset of our country.

A band of angry mob members of a far right group committed un-American acts of despicable hatred and contempt, fueled by lies, conspiracy theories and utter deceit. It was saddening and heartbreaking to watch live on television this treacherous behaviour, this travesty of distorted information, manifest itself on American soil and at our US Capitol building. Nevertheless, the two parties – just as they did after 9/11 – came together and that very same night went back to work in the US Capitol to count, verify and ratify the official election of the 46th president of the United States of America.

We settle our differences through elections, not mob action and anger. We are not perfect and we are not invulnerable. To stay indivisible, we must always remain diligent and always respectful of one another’s views and opinions. We cannot and will not be coerced, intimidated or allow violence to lead us away from our firm base of democracy that we have built upon and will have endured for 245 years.





As a country, we remain firm and resolve to carry forward, showing the world we are a democracy and a government elected by the people, for the people. A government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation which involves free elections.

Will yesterday's (at the time of writing) insurrection help heal some of the divisions that have evolved over the last 12 years in politics in the USA, in a similar way to what happened to America after 911, when at least for a period, the people of our country came together in unison and put politics aside to show our resilience, strength and love of country?

For oh so long, the USA has been a beacon of light, a beam of promise to countries around the world. We saw our allies share in the pain as they watched in horror and disbelief as yesterday's travesty and grotesque and misguided mockery of our election process unfolded for the world to see. Thugs, bums and anarchists did not and will not succeed in destroying our democracy.

I love our country, just like you love your country. There are ups and downs, but nothing should ever sink to the level that we experienced yesterday at the US Capitol building.

Country, family and industry come to mind when I think of precious values. I apologise for the misgivings of a few yesterday. That is not what America is or stands for in my opinion.

Dennis Spiegel is founder and CEO of International Theme Park Services (ITPS), based in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. A past chairman of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), he has over 50 years' experience in the theme park and leisure industry. Since its inception in 1983 ITPS has worked on over 500 projects in 50 countries and is uniquely qualified to assist in all aspects of entertainment project development.

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World news round-up ...

FRANCE Although the resort has been closed for several months, with plans to reopen again in February depending on the government's latest pandemic measures, Disneyland Paris has continued with a variety of projects for 2021, one of which is work in the Walt Disney Studios Park to transform the former Studio Tram Tour attraction into an adventure inspired by the Disney•Pixar *Cars* films, the *Cars* Route 66 Road Trip. Recent images of the attraction's construction site show the development will include new decor, familiar vehicles for *Cars* fans, a new boarding station and extensive landscaping work. This new family adventure represents another step in the plan to transform Walt Disney Studios Park and the attraction will transport guests on a picturesque road trip adventure.

THE NETHERLANDS Efteling theme park is to undertake renovation work at the Efteling Hotel. The hotel will be closed from January 4 to March 8 while all 98 comfort rooms and four junior suites are completely renovated and two additional comfort rooms are added to take the number of comfort rooms to 100. The theming, furniture and bathroom facilities will all be changed to create "a hotel room of dreams," with every piece of furniture, from bedside lamps to chairs and bathroom mirrors, replaced and the old items donated to a local charitable organisation. The Efteling Hotel originally opened in 1992 with 122 rooms, including 98 comfort rooms, four Junior Suites and 20 enchanting themed suites. The renovations will not include the 20 themed suites, which have all already undergone updates.

US Falcon's Creative Group continues to expand its patented and patent pending product offerings with a new family of attractions called SpectraVerse. These interactive walking adventures harness immersive storytelling techniques and advanced media technologies to

deliver paradigm-shifting, interactive, walk-through dark ride experiences. The joint social experiences give each individual their own positionally-tracked perspective and unique role to play, allowing them to explore infinite realms of imagination...together. The SpectraVerse attraction system comes in two distinct configurations, SpectraVerse Odyssey and SpectraVerse Quest.

CHINA With a total investment of CNY3 billion (\$464m), Hunchun Bohai Mingzhu Happy Valley, the largest amusement park in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, Jilin, China, is close to completion and expected to open this year. The project, with a total construction area of 54,000sq.m, started construction in 2018. It covers a total area of 150,000sq.m, with indoor and outdoor amusement attractions and will be capable of hosting more than 2,000 visitors per day. The roller coaster in the park, which has a height of 35m and is 200m in length, is the tallest and longest coaster so far in Yanbian.

US AQUATIC Development Group (ADG) has announced it will open a number of new FlowRider installations in 2021 following on from those in 2020. The projects will take the number of FlowRiders installed at waterparks and resorts across the United States to more than 110 and over 200 around the world. In June 2020, a FlowRider opened at Soaky Mountain Waterpark, US, where it proved popular among visitors of all ages to the new venue. In 2021, the FlowRider will be launching at The Cove, an indoor waterpark in Little Elm, Texas, at The Beach, a new outdoor waterpark in Clayton County, Georgia, and at Aquaport, the outdoor waterpark at Maryland Heights, Missouri.

Advertisers Index

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Asia Attractions Magazine | 21 |
| Asia Attractions Online Events | 31 |
| Bertazzon | 11 |
| CAE Beijing | 23 |
| C&S | 13 |
| Empex | 27 |
| Event & Amusement ExpoTokyo | 53 |
| Gosetto | 9 |
| Jinma Rides | IBC |
| Mack Rides | 5+7 |
| Polin | IFC |
| Proslide | 25 |
| RAAPA | 19 |
| S&S | 17 |
| Seasonal Entertainment Source | 9 |
| Vekoma | 15 |
| Zamperla | OBC |

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Editor: Andrew Mellor
Email: andrewfmellor@aol.com

Publisher: John Fosbrooke

News Editor: Gabrielle Picard-Whitehead
Email: editor@interpark.co.uk

Contributors this issue:
Beth Whitaker, Michael Mascioni, Dennis Spiegel,
Chris Smoje, David Whitworth

Advertising Sales: John Fosbrooke
Email: john@interpark.co.uk

Asian Sales & subscriptions: Lily Zhang
Email: lily@interpark.co.uk

Circulation Manager: Becky Wang
Email: subscriptions@interpark.co.uk

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Editorial information
Email: editorial@interpark.co.uk

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Advertising & subscription information

Tel: +44 1457 865500
Fax: +44 1618 840089
advertising@interpark.co.uk
subscriptions@interpark.co.uk

Website: www.interpark.co.uk



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